

Horizon

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

THREE POEMS FROM 'CRÈVE-CŒUR'

by LOUIS ARAGON

THE LESSON OF THE MASTER:

(i) A DAY WITH TOLSTOY

by V. VERESAYEV

(ii) SICKERT AT ST. PETER'S

by DENTON WELCH

THE FREEDOM OF NECESSITY—II

by ARCHIMEDES

MATTHEW SMITH

by RICHARD WYNDHAM

I HAD TO GO SICK

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HORIZON

EDITED BY CYRIL CONNOLLY

Vol. VI No. 32 August 1942

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The editorial and publishing offices of HORIZON are at 6 Selwyn House, Lansdowne Terrace, W.C.1.—Six months' subscription, 10/- net, including postage, U.S.A.—\$2.50. Agents for U.S.A. & Canada: Gotham Book Mart, 51 West 47th Street, New York City, U.S.A. For advertising terms please write to The Business Manager, Terminus 4898.

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COMMENT

'AUGUST for the People, and their favourite islands.' This line of Auden's is a reminder of how far we have travelled since the days of peace. Not only is the sentiment tactless and unfortunate, but the two concepts which the line contains have each deteriorated in their associations. August for the People, when August is the great month for the slaughter of the People, when the word People (People's War, People's Convention, etc.) suggests uneasy rhetoric, when heat-waves and bank holidays are associated with the gasping intake of bad news, '*Mai qui fut sans nuage, et Juin poignardé*'—and 'favourite islands', when Sark, Crete, Majorca, Bali, Pearl Harbour, have become a catalogue of horror. One wonders how much more of the literature of the 'Thirties has got the moth in it.

We may divide that literature up already into two classes—that which was conscious of political events: the literature of warning, and that which was not: the literature of appeasement. While the literature of appeasement is already unreadable, the grim anthologist of the future will be surprised to find how much the literature of warning is also at fault, because the warnings themselves are made by prophets who only half-believe them. We moaned and threatened, but from the same comfortable first-class carriage of between-wars England as the Miniver's we despised.

Yet 'August for the People' is still worth saying, and as we watch them, and observe the huge mooning Saturday crowds in the West End, the aimless soldiers of so many nations milling round the cinemas and frowsty public-houses, it seems pathetic that so little is done for them: that they have neither a 'Magic City' nor a 'Park of Rest and Culture'.

This is the more regrettable because these discontented and polyglot crowds are the nucleus of authority in the Europe of the future. They reflect the inertia which exists also in the cultural relations of the United Nations, for it is a paradox of this war that there is less intercourse between Britain and the U.S.A. since they have become allies than when the U.S.A. was a neutral; fewer books come in, fewer letters, and fewer visitors.

WHAT IS 'HORIZON'S' SOLUTION?

Open a United Nations Exhibition, on the lines of the great peacetime exhibitions in Paris and Brussels, but with strictly wartime economy. Put the exhibition in Regent's Park or somewhere central where there are some buildings and a lake. Take a large permanent building as an American centre, give it an American restaurant, an American reading-room, an American swing band, a stage for an American repertory company to put on American plays, decorate it with American furniture—ancient and modern—and American paintings. Show March of Time films in a special cinema, and have an all-American staff. Such an institution, an American Club for English, not an English Club for Americans, would work at once for good relations. Another permanent building would do the same for Russia, another for Britain, Canada, China and so on. All the Free Governments—French, Greek, Yugo-Slav, Belgian, Dutch, Norwegian—should be helped to do the best they can to provide national pavilions, each affording what pleasure they can, combined with a display of their war effort. If it is too late to start it this summer, it can be got ready for next. The more serious the war is, the more does anything which contributes to a better understanding between the Allies become worth while, and however frivolous the idea of combining pleasure with instruction at this moment may seem, it can hardly be worse than that of combining boredom with dissipation, predisposing to a drunken fight, which is the programme provided for its visitors by the largest city in the world.

ABOUT THIS NUMBER

The August *Horizon* allows for a certain summer relaxation. *The Lesson of the Master* shows two illustrations of the attitude of genius to its disciples. J. Maclaren-Ross is the author of 'A Bit of a Smash', which appeared in an early number.

The poems by Aragon are from his book, *Le Crève-Cœur*, which will be produced in a limited edition by *Horizon* and *La France Libre* in the autumn. The price of the book will be six shillings (6s. 6d. including postage), and orders will be taken in rotation. Of the poems here, the first was written during the 'phony' war; the second looks back on the French invasion of Belgium; the third (which Gide so praised in his *Imaginary Conversations*) was written in the autumn of 1940.

LOUIS ARAGON

THREE POEMS FROM
'CRÈVE-CŒUR'

LE TEMPS DES MOTS CROISÉS

O soleil de minuit sans sommeil solitude
Dans les logis déserts d'hommes où vous veillez
Epouses d'épouvante elles font leur étude
Des monstres grimaçants autour de l'oreiller

Qui donc a déchaîné la peur cette bannie
Et barbouillé de bleu panique les carreaux
Le sable sous le toit Dans le cœur l'insomnie
Personne ne lit plus le sort dans les tarots

Sorciers vous pouvez danser dans la bruyère
Elles ne veulent plus savoir si tu leur mens
Amour qui les courbas mieux qu'aucune prière
Quand la Gare de l'Est eut mangé leurs amants

Femmes qui connaissez enfin comme nous-mêmes
Le paradis perdu de nos bras dénoués
Entendez-vous nos voix qui murmurent Je t'aime
Et votre lèvre à l'air donne un baiser troué

Absence abominable absinthe de la guerre
N'en es-tu pas encore amèrement grisée
Nos jambes se mêlaient t'en souviens-tu naguère
Et je savais pour toi ce que ton corps faisait

Nous n'avons pas assez chéri ces heures doubles
Pas assez partagé nos songes différents
Pas assez regardé le fond de nos yeux troubles
Et pas assez causé de nos cœurs concurrents

Si ce n'est pas pourtant pour que je te le dise
Pourquoi m'arrive-t-il d'entendre ou de penser
Si les nuages font au jour mèches grises
Et si les arbres noirs se mettent à danser

Ecoute Dans la nuit mon sang bat et t'appelle
Je cherche dans le lit ton poids et la couleur
Faut-il que tout m'échappe et si ce n'est pas elle
Que me fait tout cela Je ne suis pas des leurs

Je ne suis pas des leurs puisqu'il faut pour en être
S'arracher à sa peau vivante comme à Bar
L'homme de Ligier qui tend vers la fenêtre
Squelette par en haut son pauvre cœur barbare

Je ne suis pas des leurs puisque la chair humaine
N'est pas comme un gâteau qu'on tranche avec le fer
Et qu'il faut à ma vie chaleur germaine
Qu'on ne peut détourner le fleuve de la mer

Je ne suis pas des leurs enfin parce que l'ombre
Est faite pour qu'on s'aime et l'arbre pour le ciel
Et que les peupliers de leur semence encombrent
Le vent porteur d'amour d'abeilles et de miel

Je suis à toi Je suis à toi seule J'adore
La trace de tes pas le creux où tu te mis
Ta pantoufle perdue ou ton mouchoir Va dors
Dors mon enfant craintif Je veille c'est promis

Je veille Il se fait tard La nuit du moyen-âge
Couvre d'un manteau noir cet univers brisé
Peut-être pas pour nous mais cessera l'orage
Un jour et reviendra le temps des mots croisés

LES LILAS ET LES ROSES

O mois des floraisons mois des métamorphoses
 Mai qui fut sans nuage et Juin poignardé
 Je n'oublierai jamais les lilas ni les roses
 Ni ceux que le printemps dans ses plis a gardés

Je n'oublierai jamais l'illusion tragique
 Le cortège les cris la foule et le soleil
 Les chars chargés d'amour les dons de la Belgique
 L'air qui tremble et la route à ce bourdon d'abeilles
 Le triomphe imprudent qui prime la querelle
 Le sang que préfigure en carmin le baiser
 Et ceux qui vont mourir debout dans les tourelles
 Entourés de lilas par un peuple grisé

Je n'oublierai jamais les jardins de la France
 Semblables aux missels des siècles disparus
 Ni le trouble des soirs l'éénigme du silence
 Les roses tout le long du chemin parcouru
 Le démenti des fleurs au vent de la panique
 Aux soldats qui passaient sur l'aile de la peur
 Aux vélos délirants aux canons ironiques
 Au pitoyable accoutrement des faux campeurs

Mais je ne sais pourquoi ce tourbillon d'images
 Me ramène toujours au même point d'arrêt
 A Sainte-Marthe Un général De noirs râmagés
 Une villa normande au bord de la forêt
 Tout se tait L'ennemi dans l'ombre se repose
 On nous a dit ce soir que Paris s'est rendu
 Je n'oublierai jamais les lilas ni les roses
 Et ni les deux amours que nous avons perdus

Bouquets du premier jour lilas lilas des Flandres
 Douceur de l'ombre dont la mort farde les joues
 Et vous bouquets de la retraite roses tendres
 Couleur de l'incendie au loin roses d'Anjou

ZONE LIBRE

Fading de la tristesse oubli
Le bruit du cœur brisé faiblit
Et la cendre blanchit la braise
J'ai bu l'été comme un vin doux
J'ai rêvé pendant ce mois d'août
Dans un château rose en Corrèze

Qu'était-ce qui faisait soudain
Un sanglot lourd dans le jardin
Un sourd reproche dans la brise
Ah ne m'éveillez pas trop tôt
Rien qu'un instant de bel canto
Le désespoir démobilise

Il m'avait un instant semblé
Entendre au milieu des blés
Confusément le bruit des armes
D'où me venait ce grand chagrin
Ni l'œillet ni le romarin
N'ont gardé le parfum des larmes

J'ai perdu je ne sais comment
Le noir secret de mon tourment
A son tour l'ombre se démembre
Je cherchais à n'en plus finir
Cette douleur sans souvenir
Quand parut l'aube de septembre

Mon amour j'étais dans tes bras
Au dehors quelqu'un murmura
Une vieille chanson de France
Mon mal enfin s'est reconnu
Et son refrain comme un pied nu
Troubla l'eau verte du silence

THE LESSON OF THE MASTER

V. VERESAYEV

I—A DAY WITH TOLSTOY

Translated from the Russian by V. H. Orfenov

IN 1902 I was deported from St. Petersburg by Sipyagin¹ and returned to my native Tula. A year before, my book, *A Doctor's Journal*, was published, and produced 'a great stir' both in Russia and abroad. In the spring of 1902 I was about to start on a journey when this letter arrived:

From Tatiana Lvovna Sukhotina,
Gaspra (estate of Countess Panina),
Koreiz,
Taurida Government

Dear Sir,

I have decided to ask for your help, which, perhaps, you will be able and willing to give me. You have probably heard of my father's long and serious illness. He is still quite helpless and can hardly turn in his bed without assistance. The condition of his heart makes it essential that he should have constant medical care. We are trying to find a doctor who would live with and look after my father. Do you know of anyone willing to undertake this post? We offer a salary of 100 roubles a month, all found, and the fare to the Crimea. If we are fortunate enough to get my father back to Yasnaya Polyana (and there is every hope now that we shall), the doctor will have to accompany him and live in our house. We shall, of course, pay all travelling expenses. I hardly need mention how important it is for us that the doctor should be a sympathetic and tactful man, as it is difficult enough for my father to accept any service, and he is sure to be worried by the thought of someone living in the house expressly to look after him.

¹Then Minister of the Interior in Russia.

Please forgive me for not addressing you properly, but I do not know your full name. Should you think of a suitable person, do let me hear at the above address. I may tell you that my father admires your writing very much and thinks you have great talent.

T. SUKHOTINA (*née Tolstoy*)

This letter filled me with happiness, pride and fear. It was clearly a delicate suggestion that I should volunteer for the post. Despite their immense circle of friends, the Tolstoys had approached me, a complete stranger. It was obvious that as the author of *A Doctor's Journal* I seemed a suitable person to look after their father. Even if it were not so, I had every right to offer my services, but for a whole week I was torn by doubts. To live in close proximity to Tolstoy, to see him constantly in his intimate surroundings, to have the chance, so rarely granted, of studying a great man in his everyday existence! I could record all that I heard and saw, not on bended knee, like the worshipper of some prophet or genius, but as an impartial observer unafraid of the ugly and the ludicrous. But how rare are such books about men of genius! How dull, pompous and lifelessly-great they appear in their biographies and the reminiscences of disciples and followers!

Such were some of my thoughts when I received the letter, but there were others too of a different kind. I was then only a very young doctor, fresh from the university, lacking in self-confidence and experience. How, under such circumstances, could I take the responsibility for a life so precious? The slightest lapse in vigilance or failure to realize the seriousness of some symptom—and the death of Leo Tolstoy might be for ever on my conscience. My authorship of *A Doctor's Journal* was another complication. Tolstoy's negative attitude to medicine and its attempts to 'resist' and 'correct' nature by inadequate means was well known. This point of view, to a certain extent, was upheld in my *Journal*, and Tolstoy, I knew, had read and approved of my book.

There is a story of two doctor's assistants where one comes to see the other and finds him glum and weary.

'What is the matter with you?'

'I am not well, have a headache and feel shivery.'

The guest with a solemn face tries to take his friend's pulse, but the sick man grins and shakes his head.

B

'Oh, drop it, don't be a fool, we both know perfectly well that the pulse does not exist.'

Well, if something like this happened to me. If I prescribed for Tolstoy and he said: 'Oh, drop it, you and I know very well that the pulse does not exist. Didn't you explain in your *Journal*?'

At last I put an end to my indecision by going abroad. From Milan I sent a letter to Tatiana Lvovna to say that I did not dare take the responsibility for the life of Tolstoy, so precious to me and to everyone.

During the next year (1902–1903) I received several invitations to visit Tolstoy; these messages were sent through a friend of Leo Nikolaevich, L. N. Nikiforov, a charming old man who had to pass through Tula each time he returned from Yasnaya Polyana to Moscow. But I was overwhelmed by fear and could not make up my mind for a long time. At last, in August 1903, I found sufficient courage to go.

I went together with the Liberal member of the Zemstvo,¹ G., and a doctor acquaintance of mine. We left Tula about 11 a.m., travelling by troika. The faces of my companions reflected my own feeling, akin to religious excitement, something between dread and joy. The nearer we got to Yasnaya Polyana, the paler grew our faces and the more animated we became. G. told us of his conversations with a peasant from a village close to Tolstoy's estate:

'Do you see Tolstoy?'

'Oh yes, ever so often.'

'Well, what is he like?'

'Not bad, a serious old man. If you meet him on the road he will talk to you; then it's as if he put out his hand to keep you away: "don't get too near, I am a Count."'

We all laughed nervously. Our carriage had now turned off the Kiev high road and was rolling along a country lane. At a distance we saw a man with two children walking across the fields. We entered the gates with two turrets, familiar from photographs, into the Yasnaya Polyana estate, and as we were driving down the long avenue of birches, one of us said: 'What if it happens to us! Don't get too near, I am a count.'

The outlines of the house appeared through the trees; our carriage stopped at the entrance and Sofia Andreevna Tolstoy

¹The Rural Council.

came out to greet us. Her manner was cordial and gracious, and it was easy to imagine how beautiful she had once been. Afterwards we were taken to the lower veranda, where we had coffee with Tolstoy's daughter, Alexandra, his son Leo, his doctor (whose name was, I think, Nikitin), and a few other persons, including children. The Countess asked if we had not seen Tolstoy, who had gone to walk in our direction, and when we replied that we had passed a man with two children crossing the fields, she said it must have been him with their grandchildren. Later she took us into the garden and spoke of her long novel, just finished. In answer to our questions she smiled: 'How could the wife of Leo Tolstoy have anything published! No, I sent it to the Rumiantsev Museum, let them do what they wish with it after my death.'

We returned to the veranda; somebody said: 'Leo Nikolaevich has come back.' Soon came another report: 'He is resting now.' Over an hour passed when at last we heard: 'He is up and will come down in a moment.' My heart began to beat faster than at the worst of school examinations. Then with light, swift steps, Tolstoy entered through the inner door. I had always imagined him tall and broad-shouldered, and it was a great surprise to see a very thin and rather small old man with drooping shoulders but with remarkably young and quick movements, in spite of his recent illness. He greeted us and sat down. I noticed the rare beauty of his hands. And like an experienced horseman who takes the reins with an assured gesture, he began a conversation, drawing us all in with the greatest ease and simplicity. First he talked to me about my *Journal*, then turned to the Zemstvo doctor:

'You probably disagree with Vikenty Vikentievich on many points?' (How and where did he manage to find out my full name?).

The doctor answered from his corner rather sullenly: 'Yes, I do.'

There was nothing in Tolstoy's manner to suggest a formal audience. He treated us as though we were old acquaintances and, having learned our names, never made a mistake in addressing us. He listened with great attention and we felt that he was genuinely interested in all we had to say. His exquisite breeding blended perfectly with a conscious desire to treat everyone as a friend. But

I still think that there was something more in his attitude towards ourselves and that he took a real interest in us. After all, why should Tolstoy, so avid for life in all its manifestations—from a distant star to the smallest insect—not feel an interest in everyone he met? I remember thinking then of what Pascal says: ‘The greater the man’s intelligence the more interesting people he discovers around him; mediocre persons do not seem to notice the difference between man and man.’

In the midst of our talk Leo Nikolaevich suddenly turned to his doctor and asked whether he was to go on with some drops for his heart. While the doctor felt his pulse, Tolstoy looked at him with docile, childlike animation. ‘Yes, go on taking the drops,’ the doctor said at last. ‘How many? Fifteen or twenty?’ Ah well, perhaps it was not quite so difficult to have him for a patient as I had imagined, perhaps the pulse did exist after all.

Dinner was announced and we went up to the first floor. On the stairs Tolstoy said to me:

‘Are you married?’

‘Yes.’

‘Any children?’

‘No.’

His face darkened.

‘How long have you been married?’

‘Six years.’

He grew silent but looked at me severely and I knew at once that his whole attitude had changed. He remained polite and gentle in his manner, but all the former warmth in his eyes had disappeared.

A huge room, shining parquet floor, old portraits on the walls, and in one corner a marble bust of Tolstoy. Sofia Andreevna sat at the head of a long table, Leo Nikolaevich on her right. Menservants wearing gloves waited at dinner. Special vegetarian dishes were served for Tolstoy. He asked me why I lived at Tula, and when I explained that the Minister of the Interior had deported me from Petersburg, he said with envy in his voice:

‘I have never been fortunate enough to be deported or sent to prison.’

After dinner Tolstoy suggested a stroll. It was fine and sunny, but in places there were puddles from yesterday’s rain. Leo Nikolaevich walked with his light gait, his long, silvery beard

stirring in the breeze. He spoke of the need for moral perfection and of the highest happiness attained by man through love.

I said: 'But what if men do not hold such love in their hearts. They understand that real happiness lies in this love yet they cannot feel it. Is this not the greatest tragedy of man?'

Tolstoy shrugged his shoulders as though bewildered.

'I don't follow you. If it is clear to men that happiness lies in love they *will* live in love. If I stand in a dark room and see light through the door, and if I need light, is it possible for me not to go where I can find it?'

'But, Leo Nikolaevich, the characters of your books prove that this is not so simple. Olenin, Levin, Nekhludov see the light yet have not sufficient strength to go to it.' But Tolstoy only made the same perplexed gesture. Yet he kept asking questions and listened seriously and attentively, anxious to grasp my idea of tragedy; then again:

'Forgive me, I don't understand.'

In my turn I felt bewildered; how could Tolstoy, of all people, fail to see that the sole tragedy of his 'seekers' lay in their inability to 'live in goodness', in spite of their belief that the only approach to happiness is through such a life.

I related the story of a young girl who had ruined her life slowly but irrevocably and sacrificed her delicate health, work and affections to save the life of another girl whose fate was already sealed. In my naïveté I imagined that this story would be particularly near to Tolstoy's heart, since he had taught so persistently that true love is not concerned with the end. I remembered the emotional intensity with which he had told the legend of Buddha offering his body to feed the starving tigress and her young. But when I looked at Tolstoy, his face was puckered with impatience and pain. He shrugged his shoulders and exclaimed in a low voice: 'God, what a story!' I was dumbfounded, but one thing suddenly became clear: had he ever witnessed an epileptic Hindu giving his body to feed a starving tigress, he would have thought it the greatest desecration of life. The very word 'tragedy' seemed to grate on his ears; with a caustic smile he muttered:

'Tragedy! . . . I remember when Turgeniev used to come . . . it was also nothing but tragedy, tragic' . . .

The way he said these words suddenly made me conscious of a deep sense of shame and a strange question flashed through my

mind: 'but is there anything truly tragic in life? Is it not all merely pretence?'

Then Tolstoy began to discuss a book sent to him by Mechnikov: *Essai de la Philosophie Optimiste*. He spoke with indignation and scorn of it and about Mechnikov's ignorance.

'Professor Mechnikov wants to correct nature. He knows better than nature what is essential for us and what is not. There is a word in Chinese—"shu". It means respect, not for some particular person or thing, but for everything that exists; for these weeds by the fence because they grow, for this cloud overhead, for this muddy road . . . when shall we learn to have reverence for life.'

As far as I can remember in the translations from Confucius the word 'shu' is generally rendered as 'do not do to your neighbour what you would not have done to you'. It would be interesting to know where Tolstoy got his interpretation. Probably from the Chinese intellectuals who visited him.

When we returned to the drawing-room for tea, we sat at a large round table lit by a lamp with a huge shade—the corner so often drawn by artists. While Sofia Andreevna played Patience my companion, G., went to the hall and brought the complete collection of the journal *Liberation* (at that time edited abroad by P. B. Struve), which he presented to our host. Tolstoy accepted the books, saying 'Thank you, how interesting!' As he turned over the pages, G. began to speak about the aims of the journal. 'Ah, yes, political freedom,' said Tolstoy, waving his hand contemptuously, 'it is neither necessary nor important. What is important, is moral perfection and love, these, and not freedom, create kindness among men.'

G. began to argue rather indulgently: 'But you must agree, Leo Nikolaevich, that freedom is necessary if only for teaching that same love.' G.'s manner was respectful, but he spoke in a condescending tone as if he were addressing a very charming but obtuse child. He preached in truisms on the felicity of political freedom. How stupid it was! Did he really think that Tolstoy had never heard those arguments before and could be convinced by such banalities? And that revolting, self-satisfied, indulgent tone! . . . But suddenly my progressive friend seemed to have disappeared into thin air—Tolstoy simply ceased to notice him and changed the conversation; yet, whatever subject was discussed,

he stubbornly returned to the necessity of moral improvement and love for our fellow men. While we talked, Tolstoy's son, Leo, red-haired, with a very small head, sat with outstretched legs in an armchair and played with his fingers. His bored face reflected but one thought: this is new to you but I am tired of it, so tired!

Tolstoy had grown pale, his lips were parted, he seemed exhausted; we got up and took our leave.

As we drove under the deep blue vault of a starlit August night, my many confused thoughts refused to unite into a single impression. I could not help thinking of the famous portrait by Repin, where Tolstoy stands bare-footed, with his thumb in his belt, a gentle 'non-resisting' expression on his face. I felt that the portrait was false and tendentious. There was nothing in Tolstoy of Christ, St. Francis, Prince Mishkin or the man of the Repin portrait. Those swift, light movements, those small eyes under bushy eyebrows, flaring up with such youthful arrogance and caustic irony! Then I remembered his reaction to my story of the self-sacrificing girl. . . . I thought of *War and Peace*, and Natasha's words about Sonia: 'To him that hath shall be given, and to him that hath not shall be taken even that which he hath.' Sonia is the 'he' that hath not. Perhaps she is without egotism, I don't know, but everything has been taken from her. . . . And then I recalled again the persistence with which Tolstoy turned every conversation into a sermon on moral perfection and our bleak boredom as we listened.

When, on my return, I was asked about Tolstoy, I replied that I might have easily taken him for a rather rigid and dull Tolstoyan, contrary and inconsistent. Whether you talk about astronomy or tomato-growing he returns to his theme of moral perfection and love, somewhat threadbare through incessant repetition.

But strangely enough, as time went on and I re-read Tolstoy's writings and thought of him as he was on the day of our meeting, his creative work began to acquire a new meaning for me, as though my unimportant personal impressions had suddenly revealed some unknown aspect of his genius. It was like a thick mist which descends on a frosty night and in the sunlight of the next morning is transformed into a crystal covering, arraying the garden—so bare the day before—in a new and complete loveliness.

In the spring of 1907, when returning to Russia, I travelled from Warsaw in the same compartment with M. S. Sukhotin.¹ We talked a great deal about Tolstoy (I was then writing my book on him and Dostoyevski), and I told Sukhotin how I understood the epigraph of *Anna Karenina*: 'Vengeance is Mine and I will repay'. I had always felt that in *Anna Karenina* is embodied Tolstoy's deepest spiritual substance, his unshakable faith that life is essentially joyous—not sombre—and should lead man towards happiness and harmony; that it is our own fault if we do not obey its calls. In her marriage with Karenin, Anna was a mother, never a wife. She did not love Karenin, yet gave him what is beautiful when there is love but becomes false and horrible without it. And life would not tolerate it. Anna was conscious of the power beyond her by which she was torn from her ugly existence. Had she honestly surrendered, a new life might have opened before her. But she was overcome by ignoble fear, she dreaded being condemned and outlawed by 'Society'. Her love was sullied by this falsity and lost all meaning except that of a forbidden delight. She had become a mistress and nothing else, just as before she was a mother and nothing else. Vainly she tried to go on with her sterile existence; but again life would not have it. Something in Anna was outraged and killed.

We can only accept in silence the verdict of supreme justice. If man fails to follow the deepest commands of the heart and timidly turns away from the great gifts life has to offer, if thoughtlessly he turns against all that is best in him, who is to blame for his destruction? 'Vengeance is Mine and I will repay.'

Sukhotin seemed interested: 'I wonder what Leo Nikolaevich would think of your interpretation.' 'Do ask him and tell me,' I said, 'I am convinced that he intended to convey something quite different, still it would be very interesting to know'. At first Sukhotin seemed to hesitate and explained how reluctant Tolstoy was to discuss his works of fiction, but in the end he promised to ask him and write to me. In a month came this letter:

Yasnaya Polyana,

23rd May 1907

Dear Vikenti Vikentievich,

Please do not think I had forgotten to ask Leo Nikolaevich about the epigraph, but as I told you before he dislikes

¹Tolstoy's son-in-law.

discussing his imaginative works, and it was only a few days ago that I found an opportune moment to speak to him about 'Vengeance is Mine'. To my regret he disagreed with your idea. I say, to my regret, because I prefer your interpretation and have a feeling that Tolstoy himself likes it better than his own. When I explained to him why I was anxious to know, he said: 'Ah yes, it is very interesting but I must repeat that I chose the epigraph to show how all the wrong done by man leads in the end to bitterness, the bitterness Anna Karenina tasted, which comes not from man but from God. Yes, I remember quite well. That was what I meant.'

I am very glad to have complied with your wish.

Yours,

M. SUKHOTIN

DENTON WELCH

II—SICKERT AT ST. PETER'S

I HAD been in Broadstairs for months, trying to recover some sort of health after a serious road accident.

My doctor, knowing that I was an art student, tried to persuade Sickert to come and see me, but he wouldn't. I was told that he stormed off down the street saying 'I have no time for district visiting!'

That was while I was still in bed. When at last I got up, someone engineered an invitation to tea on Saturday afternoon. So he did not escape me after all.

Just as I was about to leave the nursing home for St. Peter's, Sister sailed into my room closely followed by Gerald, an art school friend. He had evidently come all the way from London to see me.

I controlled my face as best I could and said:

'I'm going to tea with Sickert. What are you going to do? Can you wait here till I get back?'

He gave me one rapid glance and then said firmly:

'I'll come too.'

I was horrified. 'But you haven't been asked!' I burst out.

'That doesn't matter. One more won't make any difference.'

Feeling powerless in my convalescent state against his strength of will, I let him climb up beside me in the aged taxi which bore us swayingly to 'Hauteville'.

Sickert had not lived long in the house and it was still being altered. One entered through what at one time had been the 'cloakroom'. I remember with vividness the slight shock I received on being confronted with a glistening white 'w.c.' as soon as the door was opened.

Mrs. Sickert stood beside it, welcoming us charmingly, with great quietness. She led us into what must have been the original hall. It was now a sort of dining-room, furnished with a strange mixture of interesting and commonplace things. An early Georgian mirror with flat bevelling and worn gilt frame hung over the Art Nouveau grate. Seen thus together, each looked somehow startling and new.

We left our coats and passed on into the much loftier and larger drawing-room. The first thing I noticed was that the floor was quite bare, with that stained 'surround' which makes the white boards in the middle look so naked. By the sofa stood a stringy man who was about to go bald. The pale gold hair was still there, but one could tell how thin the crop would be next year. He looked at us with piercing eyes and fidgeted with his teaspoon. Mrs. Sickert only had time to tell us that her husband was still resting but that he would be down soon, before this man engaged her again in earnest conversation. She could only show us attention by pouring out cups of tea. My cup was of that white china which is decorated with a gold trefoil in the centre of each piece. Gerald's was quite different. It was acid-blue, I think, with an unpleasant black handle and stripe; but I noted that both our spoons were flimsy and old. I turned mine over and saw, amongst the other hall-marks, the little head of George III winking up at me.

I looked at the other things on the table, at the brown enamel teapot, the familiar red and blue Huntley and Palmer's tin, and at the strange loaf which seemed neither bread nor cake. In spite of myself, I felt that at last I was seeing Bohemian life.

I was glad that the man was keeping Mrs. Sickert so busy, for it gave me time to stare at everything in the room. I saw that

along most of the walls ran narrow panels, almost in monochrome. They looked like bas-reliefs flattened by a steam-roller. They were most decorative. Mixed with these, but standing on easels or resting on the floor, were some of Sickert's own paintings. Gwen Ffrangçon-Davies dressed in Elizabethan farthingale and ruff, with harsh white light on her face, looked out from a picture mostly green and red.

Toylike, bustled ladies and Derby-hatted men, all in soft greys and pinks, skated on a country pond. Pinned to the canvas was the original *Punch* drawing from which the composition had been taken.

Near the fireplace stood the long, brown haggard picture of the miner with his swinging lamp, just come up from the pit, grasping his wife fiercely and kissing her mouth.

As I was looking at this last picture Sickert appeared in the door. My first sight of him was rather overwhelming. Huge and bearded, he was dressed in rough clothes and from his toes to his thighs reached what I can only describe as sewer-boots.

He had seen me staring at the picture and now said directly to me:

'That picture gives you the right feeling, doesn't it? You'd kiss your wife like that if you'd just come up from the pit, wouldn't you?'

I was appalled by the dreadful heartiness of the question. I found myself blushing, and hated him for making me do so.

Sickert came right up to me and looked me all over.

'Well, you don't look very ill,' he said. 'I thought you'd be a terrible mess. Didn't you fracture your spine or something?'

I nodded my head.

He made an amusing, whining baby's face.

'Look here, I'm very sorry I didn't come and see you, but I can't go round visiting.' He waved his hand round the room. 'You see I have to keep painting all these pictures because I'm so poor.'

He took up a position with his back to the fireplace. Mrs. Sickert got up and carried a cup of tea to her husband. The stringy man also rose and floated to the door. He was still talking to Mrs. Sickert over his shoulder, and the last words I heard as he left the room were: ' . . . couldn't pass water for six days!'

This sounded so surprising that for one moment I forgot

Sickert. Then I remembered him with a jolt, for he had begun to dance on the hearth in his great sewer-boots. He lifted his cup and, waving it to and fro, burst into a German drinking-song. There was an amazingly theatrical and roguish look on his broad face.

I could not believe that he always drank his tea in this way, and I felt flattered, because he seemed to be doing it especially for us.

I don't know how long the dance or the song would have lasted if the front-door bell had not rung. Sickert suddenly broke off and waited, while Mrs. Sickert hurried out of the room.

She returned with a Mr. Raven whom I had met once before. After giving him a cup of tea, she left him standing on the hearth beside Sickert. He sipped his tea in silence for a few moments; then he began to feel in his breast-pocket. At last he brought out a rather crumpled, shiny object, and I saw that it was a photograph.

'This is my mother,' he said, pushing it under Sickert's nose.

Sickert drew back perceptibly, and gave a grunt which might have meant anything.

Mr. Raven continued unruffled. 'Interesting face, isn't it? If you'd like to do a painting of it, I'd be very pleased to lend you the photograph for as long as you liked.'

There was another grunt from Sickert.

When Mr. Raven realized that this was the only answer he was going to get, he turned very red and hurriedly thrust the portrait of his mother back into his breast-pocket. He looked just as if he had been caught in the act of displaying an indecent postcard.

Gerald and I exchanged glances. I think we were both sorry for Mr. Raven, and yet glad that his efforts towards cheap immortality for his mother had been frustrated.

Sickert, evidently prompted by Mr. Raven's action, opened a drawer in a cabinet and also produced a photograph.

'Isn't she lovely?' he said, holding it out to me.

I took the yellowing little 'carte-de-visite' between my fingers and saw that it was of some young woman of the 'eighties. She had her back to the camera, so that her face was seen in profile, resting on one shoulder. She appeared to me quite hideous with a costive, pouchy look about the eyes and mouth.

I wondered who she could be. Perhaps she was someone famous; or perhaps she was one of Sickert's past wives or mistresses.

I felt in a very difficult position. Thinking as I did, I hated to be sycophantic and say, 'Yes, she's beautiful.' So I compromised very clumsily by answering:

'The photograph is so tiny that I can't see very much of her; but I love the clothes of that period, don't you?'

Sickert snatched the photograph from me.

'Tiny! What do you mean by tiny?' he roared.

He held the picture up and pointed to it, as if he were demonstrating something on a blackboard; then he shouted out in ringing tones for the whole room to hear:

'Do you realize that I could paint a picture as big as this' (he stretched out his arms like an angler in a comic paper) 'from this "tiny" photograph as you call it?'

Horribly embarrassed and overcome by this outburst, I smiled weakly and cast my eyes down so that they rested on his enormous boots.

I was not thinking of his boots. I was thinking of nothing but the redness of my face. But Sickert evidently thought that I was curious, for the next moment he had opened another attack with:

'Ah, I see that you're staring at my boots! Do you know why I wear them? Well, I'll tell you. Lord Beaverbrook asked me to a party and I was late, so I jumped into a taxi and said: "Drive as fast as you can!" Of course, we had an accident and I was thrown on to my knees and my legs were badly knocked about; so now I wear these as a protection.'

In a dazed way, I wondered if he meant that he wore the boots to protect the still bruised legs, or if he meant that he intended to wear them as a permanent safeguard, in case he should ever again have an accident as he hurried to a party of Lord Beaverbrook's. I thought of the sensation they would create amongst the patent-leather shoes.

By this time I was so exhausted that I was pleased when Sickert turned his attention to Gerald. He started to talk about politicians, and I thought it was clever of him to guess that Gerald had an enormous appetite for tit-bits about the famous.

As I sank down on the sofa beside Mrs. Sickert, I heard them begin on Anthony Eden. Sickert was describing his good looks. He must have sensed that I was still listening, for he suddenly turned his face on me, and his eyes were twinkling with fun and malice.

'Ugly ones like us haven't a chance when there's someone like Eden about, have we?' he called out across the room.

I was so surprised at being lumped together with Sickert in ugliness, as opposed to the handsomeness of Anthony Eden (who had never struck me as anything but middle-aged), that I took him quite seriously and could answer nothing.

I hurriedly tried to compensate myself for the humiliation by telling myself that, although it might not be saying very much, I was undoubtedly by far and away the best-looking person in the room, and this in spite of my long illness.

Mrs. Sickert saw that I was ruffled and very kindly started to talk about my career. She asked me if I intended to go back to an art school when I was well enough. We discussed the various objects in the room. She told me that the two glittering monstrances had come from a Russian church. We went up to them and I took one of the sparkling things in my hands. The blue and white paste lustres were backed with tinsel. They were fascinatingly gaudy and I coveted them.

We sat talking together on the sofa for a little longer. Through our words I caught snatches of what Sickert was saying. Gerald evidently had got him on to Degas and anecdotes were streaming out. Gerald was drinking them up thirstily, while Mr. Raven hovered rather uncomfortably at the edge of the conversation.

At last he decided to go. Coming forward, he coughed slightly and held out his hand to Mrs. Sickert. Then, as he passed Sickert on his way to the door, he felt in his pocket and with almost incredible courage brought out the crumpled little photograph again.

Putting it down on the table, he said simply:

'I'll leave this just in case. . . .'

His voice tailed off as he saw the completely blank look on Sickert's face. I knew exactly what was coming and waited for it.

Sickert gave the same enigmatic grunt. It was somehow quite baffling and insulting.

Mr. Raven crept unhappily to the door and Mrs. Sickert followed swiftly to put salve on his wounds.

Immediately Raven was out of the room Sickert became boisterous. He started to dance again, thumping his great boots on the floor. Gerald and I caught some of his gaiety. We did not mention Raven, but I knew that we were all celebrating his

defeat. It was pleasant to feel that Sickert treated us as fellow-artists. I wondered how many people each year asked him to paint pictures for love.

As Mrs. Sickert did not return, we went into the hall where Sickert dragged on our coats as if he were dressing sacks of turnips. Then dancing and singing in front of us, he led the way through the 'cloak-room' to the front door. I half expected some remark about the shining flush-closet, but none came.

It was dark outside. We walked over the greasy cobbles. Sickert was still leading us. He threw open the creaking stable-yard door and stood there with his hand on the latch. He looked gigantic.

We passed through and started to walk down the road.

'Good-bye, good-bye!' he shouted after us in great good humour. 'Come again when you can't stop quite so long!'

And at these words a strange pang went through me, for it was what my father had always said as he closed the book, when I had finished my bread and butter and milk, and it was time for me to go to bed.

ARCHIMEDES

THE FREEDOM OF NECESSITY—II

THE achieving of a rational social economy is the central necessity for men today. It is the next step in human evolution. But because any successful solution must now be a conscious one, conscious understanding must pave the way to its achievement. This understanding must extend beyond the immediate political and economic problems. It must penetrate deeply into their origin and form an intelligible and dependable basis for construction as well as revolution. The great transformations of history have always been accompanied by the building of

a new picture of the relation of man to his universe, bringing with it a change in values and methods of thought. Such intellectual formulations do not, of course, cause the political and economic changes, but they do provide its conscious expression, particularly in the minds of those who are most active in bringing the changes about.

The set of ideas which we take over from past generations inevitably includes a profound acceptance of the old state of things. The values which go with these ideas are values suited to the economy of the old society and will not serve for making a new one or for living in it. New ideas and values have, however, been growing up and are now almost ready to appear as the directive forces of larger transformations. They have come into being and have spread because of the normal and intellectual dissatisfaction produced by the breakdown of the old régime. Although they can be traced philosophically as far back into the past as we wish, they were first enunciated effectively in the hey-day of capitalism in mid-nineteenth century Europe by Marx and Engels.

MARXISM

Ever since the appearance of the Communist Manifesto in 1848 there has been what might be called a permanent opposition to the once universally recognised Liberal-Capitalist picture of the world. For many years this opposition was confined to active working class circles and to a few eccentric intellectuals who from time to time came into touch with them. Official intellectual circles did not so much attack these ideas as refuse to recognize their very existence. Marxist economics, Marxist history, the contributions of Marxism to philosophy, natural science, and the arts were usually excluded from mention in universities and learned books. Even when political Marxism became powerful, as, for example, among the pre-war Social Democrats in Germany, Marxist thought was shed along with revolutionary politics. Nevertheless, a considerable infiltration of Marxist ideas into general thought was consciously or unconsciously taking place. With the advance of science it spread into wider and wider fields of human affairs and led to the discarding of many ancient superstitions. It was, however, the success of the Russian Revolution of 1917, and perhaps even more the first

five-year plan of 1928, that gave the first visible evidence to the world outside Russia of the existence and significance of Marxist methods. Marxism might be more feared and hated than before, but it could no longer be ignored.

The great new developments of science of the early twentieth century, with their emphasis on the unity of all the sciences, led almost inevitably in the learned world to a readier understanding and acceptance of Marxist dialectic. If in the Soviet Union great things could be attempted and achieved, while in the capitalist world there was nothing but depression, want and fear of war, there must be something in the ideas behind the Soviet Union that was lacking in the traditional ways of thinking. These events led to an increasing study, acceptance and enlargement of Marxist ideas, but it also resulted in an unacknowledged borrowing of Marxist ideas and their absorption in the natural view of the age. The importance of the economic factors in history, which were still ignored or denied at the beginning of the century, was by 1940 becoming a commonplace.

The transformation of ideas has been working quietly and steadily. Already everything new and vital in thought lies along these lines. The time is almost ripe for an open reformulation of beliefs and attitudes to the world comparable with, but far greater in scope than, those that marked the acceptance of Christianity or the Protestant Reformation. The difficulty of bringing about this change is, however, still very real, particularly in countries where all social and economic forms still belong to the old order even where they are in most obvious decay and disintegration. It is made even more difficult by the absence of any clear and comprehensive statement of what the new way is. The times we live in have been so full of great events, and the need for action among the conscious few has been so urgent, that we have not had anywhere a full statement of what we believe and are driving at.

NEW BELIEFS, NEW ASPIRATIONS

Treated at large, of course, this would require not a book but an encyclopædia, and a far fuller one than the great French encyclopædia that ushered in the world of Liberal Capitalism. But it need not be treated in full to bring out the essential features whereby the new ideas differ from the old. Everyone has enough

of particular experience to see where and how the general theses need to be expanded to meet their fields of knowledge and action.

The essence of the change is that we no longer believe that we live in a stable and unchanging world constructed and maintained by invisible and mysterious forces or gods, and that all we can do is limited to seeking by ambition and industry to achieve success and pleasure here, and by virtue and abnegation to prepare for a better world hereafter. Instead, we see the universe as a process of change and transformation in which new orders—stars, planets, life, animals, and finally ourselves in human society—arise one after another, not in accordance with any foreordained plan, but because of the internal strivings and contradictions which bring forth the new from the old. We see these struggles around us in human society here and now, and we see, moreover, that their outcome in building up a new stage of consciously world-organized society depends on our actions. With this understanding, man becomes for the first time a full master of his environment, social as well as material. It is now, as Engels said, that human history begins.

RELIGION, CHANGE AND SCIENCE

The new view implies deep moral and emotional changes as well as intellectual ones. Mankind has been sustained for ages through terrific struggles and hardships by a series of beliefs which were ultimately the same, in that they all implied that the affairs of human beings were manipulated by outside forces, good or bad. Men could seek comfort in the love of God and in the faith of an after life; or they could acquiesce in failure, either because God willed it or because they had been thwarted by malignant forces. These ideas, even though explicitly false, concealed an emotional reality. The belief in gods or God was really the feeling of support from the one eternal thing, the family or kin or society from which we are sprung, in which we live, and to whose future we contribute. Strictly, the savage appreciation of sacred things is far more sound than that of the religious apologist in a modern industrial community. Nevertheless, the whole of this set of ideas, however satisfying emotionally, was essentially static in its implications. The forms of human society were accepted as divine and eternal. Change was impious.

So long as society can be maintained approximately static,

such ideas are possible and even necessary, because they sanctify and preserve its technical and economic organization. They have shown their inadequacy in the long run, only because it proved impossible to prevent change in society. The rise of science, itself a product of economic development, spelt the death of the earlier ideas, not only by criticizing and undermining them as statements of fact, but even more by changing the whole pattern of life so that the older ideas had no relevance.

But what is to take their place? One of the first results of realizing the possibilities of large-scale modern enterprise has been the abandonment of the restrictive side of the old views with their emphasis on moderation and humanity, without abandoning the positive side—the seeking of individual gain at another's expense. In this sense the Nazi new order is only half new. It retains the vices inherent in the old system, without its virtues. Fascism can produce nothing but destruction and slavery. In a really new order all the older ideas will be transformed.

This is no longer a matter of choice: it is a matter of necessity. We could not go back to the old ways even if we would; and only a philosophy that recognizes both the necessity for continual change and the human responsibility for directing it can lead to a steady and happy progress. If we do not see the signs of this progress very clearly at the moment, it is because we are living in the middle of the transformation itself, and it is unfortunately inevitable that such a stupendous change in human attitudes and ways of life should be accompanied by a wide-scale return to violence and brutality. Out of this violence, however, the signs of the new way are already appearing. Men are finding in the loyalty engendered by the struggles of today an evidence of fellowship and a support far more real than that of religion or philosophy. For both have been undermined for centuries by the more or less conscious hypocrisy which was needed to make them fit with an unjust class society. The new feeling of human solidarity which now links four-fifths of the world together in the struggle of the United Nations against Fascism is one capable of being based on a rational understanding of the world men and women are living in and making, for the new ideas are essentially dynamic and suitable for a changing society.

THE NEW PHILOSOPHY

The intellectual changes required for this understanding are at least as deep and probably more difficult than the emotional readjustments. They affect not only a small and exclusive class of intellectuals, but every human being. Men must think out a reasonable and working scheme of the world they live in and cast away many apparently obvious and long-accepted beliefs. The whole vast body of human knowledge accumulated slowly through the ages, and with embarrassing rapidity in the last century or two, needs to be worked over and revalued as the basis for the new society. This revaluation is long overdue. True, officially we are probably farther from a comprehensive view of the world than people at any other time in history. This has always been said to be due to the fact that learning has become too vast for any one mind to comprehend it. The honest reason is that any attempt to put the whole of knowledge together in a rational way would inevitably mean such a criticism of the existing state of society that it could hardly be expected to find the support of schools and colleges founded to preserve and perpetuate that state of society. Once rid of these vested interests in ignorance, it is perfectly possible at any time to provide a general picture. It will be necessarily provisional because knowledge always grows, not only by adding to itself, but also by criticizing and altering its foundations; but it can and must be the only effective base of action at that time.

REVALUATION OF KNOWLEDGE

The revaluation of present knowledge must be thorough. Our present opinions date from many different periods in human history and, inevitably, the most important opinions date from the earliest periods. We would not accept the ideas of Mesopotamian herdsmen or farmers for aeroplane designing or the quantum theory, but they are still the official basis for family relations and the management of public affairs. In revaluing knowledge we can give no weight to the sacredness of long-established traditions; in fact, these need the most careful criticism. Nor can we rely any more, as the thinkers of the Renaissance thought they could, on intuitive or *a priori* knowledge. The things we are naturally most certain of are simply things that we have learnt so early in life, in accordance with the

tradition of human upbringing, that we have forgotten having learnt them. There is no absolute ethics, morals or metaphysics. What pass for these are the many times transformed customs of actual human societies. Even logic cannot be accepted uncritically.

Our new grasp of the universe is that of an orderly process, which we learn to understand and control in the same measure. We have now a fairly comprehensive outline picture of how the world is made up and how it develops. We have as well a growing understanding of the mechanisms which lie behind the different appearances of the picture; we are learning the working rules of the universe. These two aspects which, to use old terms, might be called the histories and the laws of the universe, are no longer separate for us as they were for our ancestors. To them the appearance of the world—sun, moon and stars, seasons, animals, plants, birth and death, sowing and harvest—were eternal things to be learned and fitted into life, at best with the acceptance of natural piety. The laws were the laws of God or of nature, as unchangeable as the world in which they acted.

This was, of course, only one half of the story. To explain how things came to be as they were, myth was called in. The world had to begin with a mystical act of creation and to end in a general destruction. But these first and last things were always clearly separated off from the affairs of practical life; they belonged to the other world of time, just as the other world of space contained its heaven and hell. For us today, the history of the world and the laws of its development are part of the same thing, to be understood in relation to each other. We know now that it is only the shortness of our memory and experience that make the world that we live in appear changeless, when it has been very different and will be more different still. The idea of evolution, apart from any mechanism to explain it, is fundamental in modern thought. But there are implications in evolution that go far beyond the acceptance of progressive change. The very stuff of the universe, the substances and objects that it contains, have full significance only in connection with their part in the process of evolution. It is here that dialectical materialism parts company alike with a simple materialism that takes objects as given and with an idealism that deals only with processes with no material basis.

Every distinguishable part of the world—a river, a tree or a society—has its own laws and ways of behaviour. These laws conform with the underlying material structure, but it is no mystery that this should be so, for if they did not, that part of the universe—that river, tree or society—would not have come into existence and could not continue to exist. In fact, the laws of behaviour and the things themselves are inseparably attached together. The existence of things and the movement of things are one.

STRUCTURE AND ORIGIN

These existences are not given or arbitrary; they are parts of one manifold process. Each phenomenon or organism has its forms and behaviour because of the event or events in which that form or behaviour first arose from different forms and different behaviours. There was a time when there were no rivers, no trees and no societies, a time when these first appeared, and the character of that first appearance remains embedded in the existing structure. The river and its valley are part of geological history, as well as a part of present geography or present power development. The tree carries in its different parts, leaves and wood and root, flower and fruit, the history of various shifts to which its successive ancestors were put in overcoming physical or biological difficulties in the course of its evolutionary history. So also society in its customs, rituals or sanctions refers, sometimes consciously and sometimes mythically, to its original foundation. In any account of the world, this correlation of structure and historic event is the main modern contribution. It adds enormously to the meaning of the universe because it enables us to give proper weight to the importance of its different parts.

We are not impressed, as were our savage forefathers, by the mere size of the earth and heavens, or by the strength of natural forces, because we know that these belong to a very early order of evolution, that their size and strength goes with an organization almost infinitely simpler than that of the lowest living speck. This, for our generation, is not merely belief but practice. The blind forces of nature are now our slaves. We reserve our real fears, difficulties and real efforts for the forces of the most complex parts of the universe, human societies themselves.

The evolutionary process gave us a time chart of the world. We can now see this time chart running parallel, and connected at each level, with an organization chart. Each stage in the development has its own laws which pass on with it into the subsequent stage, and to them are added new laws which can have meaning only for the more complex and later stages. Priority in time goes with basic simplicity in structure, and sequence in time with the hierarchy of complexity in organization. It is from this point of view that we can present a full and comprehensive picture of a moving and developing universe.

The indefinite complexity of the actual world, and the fact that we are still only beginning to understand it in detail, should not prevent us from being able to seize the broad essentials of its structure and history. Almost certainly in the future we may wish to add on important stages that are at present obscure to us, particularly at the beginning of the story; and as human society itself develops, we may ourselves make new stages to add to the end. But the stages we do block out now will still remain.

CRITICAL STAGES

The main stages correspond to a series of critical events between which development was comparatively uniform and progressive. They are the origins of the cosmos, with its stars and planets, the origin of life, the origin of human society, of civilization and of the common conscious control of it. The fact that each of these stages took many thousand times as long as the one following it does not prevent them from representing a true sequence scale of the universe, because it is a measure of not only the number, but also the complexity of events; and the complexity of the last ten years of the modern social world is greater than the complexity of all the nebulae, stars and planets before the origin of life on one of them.

Going with each of these stages is a corresponding set of modes of motion, or laws. To the origin and formation of the cosmos belongs physics; to the origin of life, chemistry; to the development and function of life forms, biology; to the origin of human society, anthropology and psychology; to the origin of civilization, technics, politics and economics; to the origin of a deliberately controlled political and economic organization, the new philosophies of science and society.

What is asserted here is twofold: that we cannot understand or control the historic processes without knowing their laws, and conversely, that we cannot fully understand or apply the laws of science without relating them to the state of events in which those laws first appeared. For example, the study of the chemical structure and chemical metabolism of the simplest living elements in cells is at the same time the study of the origin of life on this planet. The particular chemicals and interactions that occur in cells are not just arbitrarily governed. Biological chemistry seems peculiar because the actual chemicals that occur in animals and plants are an extremely limited set out of the many billion compounds that could be made from the same number of the same atoms, nor is it easy to see why these chemicals and not others occur. This peculiarity, however, points to the common origin of all biological systems, and to the logically connected sequence of events by which each chemical came to play its new and special rôle. It does not matter if at present some of the details of this sequence can only be somewhat wildly guessed at. From the pieces that we know already, the connection between origin and behaviour is clearly apparent.

THE ORIGIN OF NOVELTY

But to describe the universe, and to explain how it works and how it is evolved, is not enough. To understand and to control it fully, we must know more as to why each stage in its particular time and place gave birth to the next. This problem of the origin of novelty is the central problem of philosophy, and needs to be sharply distinguished from merely verbal problems of the nature of truth or the origin of knowledge. How, in fact, did the new complexities, the new order of existence, the galaxies, stars, planets, life, human society, civilization, science, come into being from the old? We can no longer do like our forefathers and pretend to answer the question by saying that the new arose through the agency of some mysterious creator or even more mysterious creative force. To us these are mere words concealing blank ignorance, and for us the open admission of ignorance is the beginning of knowledge, for it is the admission that a problem exists to be solved, and a challenge to solve it.

Thanks largely to Marx and Engels we are beginning to see something of the answer to the problem of novelty. We see that

no stage is really static, or merely moving round in endless identical cycles. Day and night, spring and autumn, generation succeeding generation or dynasty after dynasty are no longer bounds of our mental horizons. For us there is no longer 'nothing new under the sun'. Each radical change from one stage of organization to another is, as Marx saw, a result of struggle between forces which had come into existence in the earlier stage. This is no matter for philosophic speculation, it is an observable fact. In any system large enough and long-lived enough not to be at the mercy of external forces, what the scientists call chance variations or side reactions are always taking place. These never completely cancel each other out, and there results an accumulation which sooner or later provides a trend in a different direction from that of the original system. In time, the accumulation or trend oversteps the limit of stability laid down in the earlier system; there is a crisis, and, although many crises may be abortive, sooner or later one will introduce a new system with its new order. How this happens in detail is a matter for never-ending scientific research, but we have enough examples of it roughly worked out to see how to present a convenient working account of what has actually happened and what is happening now.

The working account is itself a product of human activities. As time goes on and knowledge accumulates and interests change, new aspects come into prominence: not so much aspects which have been obscure before, as those which have been taken for granted because of our confusion of the familiar with the understood. Thus, in early ages, when the extremely complex organization of society with its hundreds of customs and traditions was taken for granted, the practical properties of materials were the source of both new techniques and of elementary philosophy. Man has approached simple things first, not only because these are simple and can be seen and understood more easily, but also because they are more removed from the complex of feelings and traditions that build up society. Even today, while we are completely scientific about such things as engines and wireless sets, biology still has to fight traces of old religious views, and economics and sociology have hardly broken away from the taboos against questioning the society in which we live. This reluctance explains how it was that man for so long failed to

see the generation of novelty that was going on in human society more rapidly than anywhere else.

THE WORK OF MARX AND ENGELS

That human society is itself a human creation was indeed a most daring idea. Vico first glimpsed it and stated it in principle, but it is to the courage and clear-sightedness of Marx and Engels that we owe its effective analysis. They saw society changing before their own eyes; they realized that they had to account for that change without invoking outside agencies. When they had done so they immediately saw the possibilities of extending the kind of creation of novelty that they observed in human society to all other evolutionary processes in the universe, thus making it possible for the first time to understand it and cope with it rationally as a whole.

RICHARD WYNDHAM

MATTHEW SMITH

THAT painters—particularly those who consider themselves revolutionary—should choose to form themselves into ‘groups’ is natural, though somewhat purposeless. But when the art critic starts writing out his own labels—that is the height of presumption and usually misleading. After this categorical statement, I propose to enjoy the luxury of proving myself the exception: I propose to start this article by dividing artists into two groups. Let us call them simply A and B.

In the case of artists belonging to group A (Rubens, Douanier, Rousseau, and Picasso are examples) there can never be any question of failure on the part of the body: the hand, the eyes, the brain—like superb servants—carry out their orders without so much as an undertone of resentment. This group represents the organized household where the master is free to create—

wandering through the glories of his palace or gardens. Never need he go 'below stairs'.

In group B the artist is frustrated by a physical or psychological inability to paint. His servants either refuse to obey him, are incapable of being taught, or require years of training. The first two eventually drive their masters into some other profession or world. But the servant who can be trained—however slow the process—may end by serving a genius: Cézanne, for instance, the dunce of the art school at Aix-en-Provence. (The popular anecdote 'Je ne peux pas' is now, I believe, discredited by some dealers whose principal clients are men who get things done. But years ago in Aix I visited a fellow student and friend of Cézanne who described to me, with that truthful clarity which is one of the most unexpected gifts of extreme old age, how Cézanne was continuously coming over to his easel to ask for help. My host's paintings—stacked round the studio walls—were the usual Marseille shop-window seascapes of the 'Martigues School'.) Among English artists we have an example in Blake, who found it impossible to draw the human form either from life or the cast.

The above are more normal cases. Matthew Smith, on the other hand, is the supreme example of the will to create being frustrated for years by malignant inability: his whole life from youth to middle-age was represented by a fervent desire to paint, but his average output was perhaps a picture a year. Most of these he destroyed. It was not until he was forty-seven that he held his first exhibition.

The exhibition was also the dealer's first important venture. It was held in a small first-floor room in Sackville Street: 'The Mayor Gallery'. As we shall see, it had a mediocre reception. This was to be expected, but Matthew Smith's years of empty desire were over: he continued to paint not only with growing confidence but prolifically. Within a year he was holding his second exhibition at Reid & Lefevre Gallery; four more followed at Arthur Tooth's Gallery between 1929 and 1936. Most of his later work has been lost at the fall of France, where it was left behind in the home he had made for himself in his favourite Aix. Nevertheless, at the time of writing he is holding two exhibitions simultaneously: one at Leeds, the other at the Lefevre Gallery.

This article is written round the latter, which contains examples of almost every period of Smith's work since 1913 and helps to illustrate the long struggle that has led to his present fame.

* * *

It was not until I saw Matthew Smith's first exhibition at 'The Mayor Gallery' that I was even conscious of the existence of this great English painter. (Alas! I had missed or passed by the few canvases he had shown from time to time at The London Group.)

Not unnaturally I concluded that this middle-aged discovery could only be a 'peintre de Dimanche': a country solicitor's clerk, perhaps, or manager of a small branch bank. But nothing could have been further from the truth; Smith, I learnt, had attended three Art Schools over a period of six years and had been painting, or trying to paint, since a youth.

Born in 1879, son of a Manchester manufacturer, he was not even forced to face the paternal wrath that most Victorian boys would have taken for granted had they dared ask to quit the family firm in order to become an artist. True, he was made to serve four years' apprenticeship between the age of seventeen and twenty-two—two years in textiles and two in his father's business of wire-making. True, when—his apprenticeship over—he was allowed to enter the Manchester School of Art he found himself barred, on his father's instructions, from the life room, and the first two of his four years of study were spent in drawing from plaster casts of classical friezes. This was no moral ban; rather an insurance that—art failing—the son could return, with an improved taste in design to the textile trade. And, considering that so far the only evidence of the boy's ability to paint had been an intense desire (his nickname at the school was 'Mr. Futile'), one can but feel that the father's prevision was justified.

Such behaviour, in fact, on the part of a Victorian Lancashire business man would seem enlightened had not the father himself been an artist. He played the violin with skill, spent many years of his life and a considerable portion of his profits in acquiring a rare collection of stringed instruments, wrote sonnets on the violin published under the title 'A Chest of Violets', and adopted a musical 'genius': a poor boy, a prodigy whose tuition he paid for for many years before sending him out to conquer the world—

out into oblivion. In the meanwhile the genius son of this Lancashire family had been allowed to take himself to London. He entered the Slade School in 1905.

By nature excessively timid, he stood petrified as Tonks crossed the studio to make his first criticism: 'No sense of drawing; no ability to paint.' One wonders whether such a criticism at such a moment was not enough to sterilize a sensitive artist for years—perhaps for life. Smith left the Slade School after two years, only to suffer a nervous breakdown; all painting ceased. He next tried living in Brittany for a year or two; he might just as well have returned to Manchester; few canvases were finished, and they were destroyed.

One can sense his agony, as of a man inflicted with some unknown disease: willing to consult specialist or quack; move from spa to spa; accept any advice from any chance-met hypochondriac.

But Smith had tried everything: six years at art schools; long, long hours studying and copying in galleries (seeking help above all from Delacroix and Tintoretto, influences that remain predominant today); and now travel (a painter's last hope) had failed him. All had failed him; for the servant had still not learnt to put on to canvas the turbulent vision of the master.

In 1910, at the age of thirty-one, Matthew Smith decided to become a student again. He joined 'L'Atelier Matisse' in Paris, but for a month only, after which the school closed down. Yet, out of all his years of art schools, this single month seems to have had the greatest, if not the only, benefit on Matthew Smith's painting. But five more years went by with little done; long enough, one might argue, to make those few weeks in Paris too remote to matter. Except that—the five years over—Smith painted 'Dulcie'—a masterly painting, and one of his first works to escape destruction—but frankly 'École des Fauves'.

After three years of war service, Smith returned—as we all do—to his last memory of peace: in 1919 he painted a number of canvases of subtle beauty, such as 'Apples' and 'Apples on a fluted dish'. In these we find all the quality of the mature artist, but they are still unashamedly under the influence of Matisse. There is as yet no foretaste of the man who for years had only understood the colours of our world as pure colour and was still waiting until he could train his servants: the eye, the hand,

and the brain to combine in expressing this idiosyncrasy in terms of 'Artist's Colourmen's' paint.

But there was now only another year to wait: in 1920 Smith took his family for a holiday in Cornwall, and there, for the first time, all feeling of frustration left him. In spite of his terror of being alone, he allowed his family to return without him. During the next few months, living entirely by himself over a small grocer's shop, he painted a series of landscapes that could have been painted by no other man. The only example of this period included in the Reid & Lefevre exhibition was outstanding, though unfortunately hung in a corner as being the type of painting that 'has not a general appeal'.

Two years more and the servants were driving the master. Smith went to live in Paris and between 1923 and 1925 produced his first great period of painting. He found he could now work as fast as his physique allowed him—sometimes completing three paintings in a day. Using, as he does, an exceptional quantity of oil, he had to lay the wet canvases face upward on the floor until he frequently found himself imprisoned by his own work. In 1926 he was ready for his first one-man show.

Matthew Smith was present at his private view at 'The Mayor Gallery' (he has attended none since); but few bothered to hush their voices when expressing their disgust at the pictures on the walls. For who could have recognized the artist in this timid, myopic, slightly stooping figure whose afternoon consisted of being tugged from one side of the narrow room to the other by his two small boys up for the day from school? Who could have believed that here was the creator of these turgid nudes that still lived, still tempted, though conceived in tones of crimson so deep that the highest light of the cheekbone or breast held the richness of pigeon's blood; or these landscapes seen with such ferocity of ownership that one would have hardly dared walk the dark roads without the artist by one's side.

Few thought of buying, and, of those few, painters predominated: Epstein, Augustus John. The rest took their grumbles to their club, or Lyons' or Gunters' and soon forgot.

Matthew Smith may have felt a little disheartened as he left the emptying room. But not for long; he could go back to his studio and paint—paint until physically exhausted, or until the light failed.

J. MACLAREN-ROSS

I HAD TO GO SICK

I HADN'T been in the Army long at the time. About a week, not more. We were marching round the square one afternoon and I couldn't keep in step. The corporal kept calling out 'Left, left!' but it didn't do any good. In the end the corporal told me to fall out. The platoon sergeant came rushing up and said: 'What the hell's wrong with you, man? Why can't you hold the step?'

I didn't know, I couldn't tell him. There was an officer on the square, and the sergeant-major, and they were both watching us.

'Got anything wrong with your leg?' the sergeant said. 'Your left leg?'

'I've got a scar on it, Sergeant,' I told him.

'Dekko,' the sergeant said.

So I rolled up my trouser leg and showed him the scar on my knee. The sergeant looked at it and shook his head. 'That don't look too good, lad,' he said. 'How'd you come to get it?'

'I was knocked down by a bike. Years ago.'

By this time the sergeant-major had come up and he looked at the scar too. 'What's your category, lad?' he asked me. 'Air?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Well, you go sick to-morrow morning and let the M.O. have a look at that leg. Meantime sit in that shed over there till it's time to fall out.'

There was a Bren Gun lesson going on in the shed when I got there. My arrival interrupted it. 'Who the hell are you?' the N.C.O. taking the lesson asked me. 'What d'you want?'

'I've been sent over here to sit down, Corporal.'

'To sit down?'

'Sergeant-major sent me.'

'Oh, well, if he sent you that's all right. But don't go opening your trap, see? Keep mum and don't say nothing.'

'Very good, Corporal.'

'Not so much of it,' the corporal said.

The lesson went on. I listened but couldn't understand what it was all about. I'd never seen a Bren Gun before. And then the corporal's pronunciation didn't help matters. I sat there in the

shed until everyone else had fallen out. Then the sergeant-major came over to me.

'Fall out,' he said. 'What're you waiting for. Parade's over for the day, you're dismissed. And don't forget—you go sick tomorrow morning,' he shouted after me.

'How do I go sick?' I asked the other fellows, back in the barrack-room.

They didn't know, none of them had ever been sick. 'Ask the Sarnt,' they said.

But I couldn't find the sergeant, or the corporal either. They'd gone off to a dance in the town. So I went down to the cookhouse and there was an old sweat sitting on a bucket outside, peeling spuds. You could see he was an old sweat because he was in shirt sleeves and his arms were tattooed all over. So I asked him how to go sick, and he said: 'Ah, swinging the lead, eh? M.O.'ll mark you down in red ink; likely.'

'What happens if he does that?'

'C.B. for a cert. Scrubbing, or mebbe a spot of spud bashing. You won't get less than seven days, anyhow.'

'What, seven days' C.B. for going sick?'

'Sure, if you're swinging the lead. Stands to reason. There ain't nothing wrong with you now, is there? A1, aintcher?'

'Yes.'

'There you are then. You'll get seven all right,' said the sweat. 'What d'you expect? All you lads are alike, bleeding lead-swingers the lot on you.'

He spat on the ground and went on peeling spuds. I could see he wasn't going to say any more so I walked on. Further along I stopped by another old sweat. This second sweat was even older and more tattooed than the first one. And he hadn't any teeth.

'Excuse me,' I said, 'can you tell me how to go sick?'

'Go sick?' said this second, toothless sweat. 'You don't want to do that, cocker. Christ, you don't want to do that.'

'Why not?' I said.

'Well, look at me. Went sick I did with a pain in the guts, and what's the M.O. do? Silly bleeder sent me down the Dental Centre and had them take all me teeth out. I ask you, do it make bleeding sense? Course it don't. You got the guts ache and they pull out all your teeth. Bleeding silly. And they ain't given me no new teeth neither, and here I been waiting six munce. No,'

said the sweat, 'you don't want to go sick. Take my tip, lad: keep away from that there M.O. long as you can.'

'But I've got to go sick. I've been ordered to.'

'Who by?'

'Sergeant-major.'

'What's wrong with you?'

'My leg, so they say.'

'Your leg? Then mebbe they'll take your teeth out too. Ain't no knowing what they'll do once they start on you. I'm bleeding browned-off with the bleeding sick I am.'

'Well, how do I go about it?'

'See your Orderly Sarnt. Down Company Office. He's the bloke you want.'

On the door of the Orderly Sergeant's bunk it said *Knock and wait*. I did both and a voice shouted: 'Come in, come in. Don't need to bash the bleeding door down.'

There was a corporal sitting at a table covered with a blanket writing laboriously on a sheet of paper.

'Yeh?' he said, looking up. 'What d'you want?'

'I was looking for the Orderly Sergeant,' I said.

'I'm the Orderly Sergeant,' said the corporal. 'State your business and be quick about it. I ain't got all night.'

'I want to go sick, Sergeant. I mean Corporal.'

'Don't you go making no smart cracks here,' said the corporal.

'And stand properly to attention when you speak to an N.C.O.'

'Sorry, Corporal.'

'Ain't no such word in the British Army,' the corporal told me.

'Now what's your name? Age? Service? Religion? Medical category? Okay, you parade outside here eight-thirty tomorrow morning. On the dot.'

I went to go out, but the corporal called me back. 'Here, half a mo. How d'you spell Picquet? One K or two?'

'No K's at all, Corporal,' I told him.

'Listen; didn't I tell you not to be funny? I'll stick you on a chitty, so help me, if you ain't careful. How d'you mean, no K's. How can you spell Picquet without no K's?'

I explained. The corporal looked suspicious. 'Sure? You ain't trying to be funny?'

'No, Corporal. P-i-c-q-u-e-t.'

'Okay.' He wrote it down. 'Need a bleeding dictionary to

D

'write this bastard out,' he muttered, and then looking up: 'All right, what're you waiting for? Scram! Gillo! And don't forget, 0830 tomorrow. Bring your small kit in case.'

I didn't like to ask him in case of what. I got out quick before he gave me scrubbing or spud-bashing or tried to take my teeth out maybe.

I didn't sleep too well that night, I can tell you. Next morning at 0830 there I was outside the orderly sergeant's bunk with my small kit: I'd found out from our sergeant what that was. There were quite a lot of other fellows there as well. It's funny how they pass you A1 into the Army and then find out you're nothing of the sort. One of these fellows had flat feet, another weak lungs, and a third reckoned he was ruptured.

After awhile the corporal came out. 'All right,' he said. 'Get fell in, the sick.'

We fell in and were marched down to the M.I. Room.

'Keep in step, you!' the corporal shouted at me. 'Christ, can't you keep step?'

Down at the M.I. Room it said on the walls *No Smoking, No Spitting*, and we sat around waiting for our names to be called out. At last mine was called and I went in. The M.O. looked up. 'Yes, what's wrong with you?'

I looked round. There were two fellows standing behind me waiting their turn. A third was putting on his trousers in a corner. More crowded in the doorway behind. I felt silly with all these fellows listening in. I didn't know what to say.

'Come on, out with it,' said the M.O. 'Or perhaps it's something you'd rather say in private?'

'Well, sir, I would prefer it.'

'Right. Come back at five tonight.'

I went out again.

'What'd you get?' the orderly sergeant asked me.

'He said to come back at five, Corporal.'

'What's wrong? Got the clap?'

'No, Corporal.'

'Crabs, maybe?'

'No, not crabs.'

'Well, what the hell you want to see him in private for, then? Only blokes with V.D. see him in private as a rule. Unless they've crabs.'

At five I reported back to the M.I. Room.

'Right,' said the medical corporal. 'This way. Cap off. Don't salute.'

The M.O. said: 'Ah yes. Sit down and tell me all about it.'

I did. He seemed a bit disappointed that I hadn't V.D., but in the end he examined my leg.

'Does it hurt? No? What about if you kneel on it? H'm, yes, there's something wrong there. You'd better see the specialist. Report here to morrow at ten.'

The specialist was at a hospital some miles away from the camp. He said: 'Try and straighten the leg. What, you can't? All right. Put your trousers on and wait outside.'

Pretty soon an orderly came out with a chitty. 'You're to have treatment twice a week,' he told me. 'Electrical massage. This way.'

I followed him down a lot of corridors and finally out into the grounds and up some steps into a hut with *Massage* on a board outside it. There I lay down on a table and a nurse strapped some sort of pad on my thigh. After that they gave me a series of shocks from an electric battery. It lasted about half an hour.

'Feeling better?' the nurse asked me when it was over.

'No,' I said.

I could hardly walk.

'That'll wear off by and by,' said the nurse.

I drove back in an ambulance to the M.I. Room.

'Had your treatment?'

'Yes, sir.'

The M.O. started to write something on a piece of paper. I was a bit nervous in case he used the red ink. But he didn't after all. He used blue ink instead. 'Give this to your Orderly Sergeant,' he said.

On the piece of paper it said 'Att. C.'

'Attend C!' said the orderly sergeant. 'Cor, you got it cushy, ain't you?'

'What's it mean, Corporal?' I asked.

'Attend C? Excused all duties. Bleeding holiday, that's what it amounts to.'

'Excused all duties,' the other fellows said in the barrack-room.

'You lucky cowson. With a bleeding march coming off tomorrow and all.'

Two days later I went to the hospital again. After a week or two of the treatment I'd developed quite a limp. The fellows all said I was swinging the lead. I limped about the camp doing nothing, in the intervals of having more electric shocks. Then, after about three weeks the M.O. sent for me again.

'Is your leg any better now?'

'No, sir,' I said.

'Treatment not doing you any good?'

'No, sir.'

'H'm. Well, I'd better put you down for a medical board in that case.'

So I didn't even go to the hospital any more. I used to lie on my bed all day long reading a book. But I got tired of that because I only had one book and I wasn't allowed out owing to being on sick. There weren't any other books in the camp. Meanwhile the fellows were marching and drilling and firing on the range, and the man in the next bed to me suddenly developed a stripe. This shook me, so I thought I'd go and see the sergeant-major.

I was a bit nervous when I got to his office. The sergeant-major had an alarming appearance. He looked almost exactly like an ape. Only he'd less hair on him, of course. But he was quite a decent fellow really.

When I came in he was telling two clerks and an A.T.S. girl how he'd nailed a native's hand to his desk during his service in India. He broke off this recital when he saw me standing there.

'Yes, lad, what d'you want?'

I explained that I was waiting for a medical board and meantime had nothing to do, as I was excused parades.

'But d'you *want* something to do?' the sergeant-major asked. He seemed stupefied.

'Yes, sir,' I said. 'I didn't join the Army to do nothing all day.'

The two clerks looked up when I said that, and the A.T.S. stared at me with her mouth open. The sergeant-major breathed heavily through his nose. Then he said: 'Can you use a typewriter, lad?'

'Yes, sir,' I said.

'Ah!' He jumped up from his table. 'Then sit you down here and show us how to use this ruddy thing. It's only just been sent us, see, and none of us know how to make the bleeder go.'

It was a very old typewriter, an Oliver. I'd used one before, so

I didn't find it too difficult. Soon I was typing out long lists of names and other stuff full of initials and abbreviations that I didn't know the meaning of. Sometimes I couldn't read the handwriting, especially if one of the officers had written it, but the A.T.S. used to translate for me.

Then one day the Company Commander walked in.

'Who's this man?' he said, pointing at me with his stick.

'Sick man, sir,' the sergeant-major said. 'Waiting a medical board.'

'Well, he can't wait for it here. We're not allowed any more clerks. You've enough clerks already,' and he walked out again, after hitting my table a whack with his stick.

'All right, fall out,' the sergeant-major said to me. 'Back to your bunk.'

'Now we've no one to work the typewriter,' he said. 'Have to do it all by hand. Hell!'

Next day the orderly sergeant told me to go sick again. I'd got used to it by now. The other fellows called me the M.O.'s right marker.

This time it was a new M.O.: the other one had been posted elsewhere.

'Well, what's wrong with you?' he said.

I explained my case all over again.

'Let's see your leg.' He looked at it for a moment and then said: 'Well, there's nothing wrong with that, is there?'

'Isn't there, sir?'

'No.' He poked at the scar, seized hold of my leg, bent it, straightened it a few times and then looked puzzled. 'H'm. There is something wrong after all. You'd better have a medical board.'

'I'm down for one already, sir.'

'What? Well why the devil didn't you say so then? Wasting my time. All right. You can go now.'

In the morning the orderly sergeant came into our hut. 'Get your small kit together,' he said, 'and be down the M.I. Room in ten minutes. You're for a medical board. It come through just now.'

At the hospital I sat for some time in a waiting-room and nobody came near me. It was another hospital, not the one I used to go to for treatment. Then at last an officer came in. I stood up. He was a colonel.

'Carry on, carry on,' he said, and smiled very kindly. 'What's your trouble, eh?'

'I'm waiting for a medical board, sir.'

'A medical board? What for?'

'I have trouble with my knee, sir.'

'Oh? What happens? Does it swell up?'

'No, sir.'

'What, no swelling? H'm. Well, come with me, we'll soon have you fixed up.' I followed this kindly colonel to the reception desk. 'Take this man along to Ward 9,' he told an orderly.

So I went along to Ward 9 and all the beds in it were empty except for one man sitting up in bed doing a jig-saw puzzle.

'Wotcher, mate,' this man said. 'What you got? Ulcers, maybe?'

'Ulcers? No,' I said.

'I got ulcers,' the man said. 'Stomach ulcers. Can't keep nothing down. Everything I eat comes up. Nothing but milk, and even that come up sometimes. It ain't no fun having ulcers, believe me, mate.'

'I can imagine that,' I said.

Then a nurse came in. 'Ah, you're the new patient. This way to the bathroom. Here are the pyjamas you change into afterwards.'

'Pyjamas?' I said.

'Yes,' said the nurse. 'And directly you've bathed and got your pyjamas on you hop into this bed here,' and she pointed to one next the man with ulcers.

'But I don't want to go to bed,' I said. 'I'm not a bed patient. There's nothing wrong with me.'

'Then why are you here?'

'Nothing wrong with me like that, I mean. I'm waiting for a medical board.'

'Oh. Wait here a moment, please.' She fetched the orderly. The orderly said: 'S.M.O.'s orders he was to be brought here. Said it hisself. The S.M.O. Ward 9, he said.'

'But this ward is for gastric cases,' the nurse said. 'This man isn't a gastric case.'

'I don't know nothing about that,' the orderly told her, and he went off.

The nurse said: 'There's some mistake. I'll see about it while you have your bath.'

So I had a bath, and when I came out she gave me some blue clothes and a shirt and a red tie to put on and said I needn't go to bed. 'You'll have to stay here until we get this straightened out,' she said. 'Would you like anything to eat?'

'I would, thank you, Nurse.'

'Well, there's only milk pudding. This ward's for gastrics, you see.'

'You won't get very fat on that, mate,' the man with ulcers said.

He was right. I ate two lots of milk pudding but still felt hungry afterwards. Then later on the M.O. came round. A lieutenant, he was. Quite young. He looked at my leg and said: 'This man's a surgical case, Nurse. What's he doing in here?'

'S.M.O.'s orders, Doctor.'

'Oh. Well, he'll have to stay here then.'

'How long will it be before I get this medical board, sir?' I said.

'Medical board? Might be months. Meantime you stay here.'

'Can I have something to eat besides milk pudding then, sir?'

'Yes. You can have chicken. Give him some chicken, Nurse.'

So he went away and I ate the chicken.

'Wish I was you, mate,' said the man with ulcers.

It wasn't so bad being in the hospital except that you only got eight-and-six on pay day. Every morning I used to go down to the massage department. 'Electrical massage is no good for your trouble,' said the M.O. 'We'll try ordinary massage.' So I had ordinary massage and then sat on a table with a weight tied to my leg swinging it to-and-fro.

'Now I know what swinging the lead means,' I said.

I used to have to lie down for two hours a day to recover from the treatment. I was limping quite heavily by the time the M.O. put his head in one morning and said: 'You're for a Board today. Twelve o'clock down in my office.'

I waited outside the office nervously, I thought they might order me to have my teeth out. But they didn't. I was called in and there were three medical officers, one a lieutenant-colonel, who asked me a lot of questions and examined my leg, and then I went back to the ward.

'How'd you get on, mate?' asked the ulcers-man. 'What'd they do?'

'I don't know,' I said. 'They didn't tell me.'

But that evening the M.O. came in and said: 'You've been graded B2.'

'What does that mean, sir?'

'Garrison duties at home and abroad.'

'Can I go back to the camp then, sir?'

'Not until the papers come through.'

A few days later he sent for me. In his office. 'Something's gone wrong,' he said. 'We've slipped up. It seems you should have seen the surgical specialist before having the Board. But you didn't, so these papers aren't valid. You'll have to have another Board now.'

'When'll that be, sir?'

'I don't know. Don't ask me.'

So that afternoon I saw the surgical specialist. He was a major, although he seemed quite young. He was very nice and cheerful and laughed a lot.

'Lie down on the table,' he said. 'That's right. Relax. Now bend the knee. Now straighten it. Hold it. Hold it. Try to hold it steady. Ha, ha! You can't, can you? Ha, ha! Of course you can't. You've got no tendon in it, that's why. The patella tendon. It's bust. How long ago did you say the accident . . . ? Sixteen years? Good lord, nothing we can do about it now. You'll have to be awfully careful, though. No running, no jumping. If you were to jump down into a trench your leg'd snap like a twig. Can't understand how they ever passed you A1. Ha, ha! Well, I'll make my report on you right away. Oughtn't to be in the infantry with a leg like that at all.'

I went back to Ward 9. It was supper time. Junket.

'Can't keep it down,' said the man with ulcers, and he proved this by bringing it up again.

Well then the M.O. went on leave.

'Now you stay here,' he told me, 'until the next Board comes off. Don't suppose it'll be till I'm back from my seven days. Meantime you stay put.'

'Yes, sir,' I said.

But in the morning a new M.O. came round. He was a captain. With him was the matron. 'Stand by your beds!' he called out as he came in.

The ward had filled up in the last week or two, but most of the patients were in bed, so they couldn't obey. The five of us who were up came belatedly to attention.

'Bad discipline in this ward, Matron,' the captain said. 'Very slack. Who's the senior N.C.O. here?'

There was only one N.C.O. among the lot of us: a lance-corporal. He was up, as it happened, so he came in for an awful chewing-off.

'You've got to keep better order than this, Corporal,' said the captain. 'See that the men pay proper respect to an officer when he enters the ward. If I've any further cause for complaint I shall hold you responsible. Also the beds aren't properly in line. I'm not satisfied with this ward, not satisfied at *all*. I hope to see some improvement when I come round tomorrow. Otherwise . . .'

He walked on round the beds examining the patients in turn. The ward was electrified. He ordered most of the bed patients to get up and those who were up to go to bed. Except the lance-corporal, who had to keep order, and me. As for the man with ulcers, he was ordered out of the ward altogether. I was last on the list, standing by the end bed, when he came up.

'This man is fit to return to his unit, Matron,' he said when he'd looked at me.

'But he's awaiting a medical board, Doctor,' the matron said.

'Well, he can wait for it at his unit. We're not running a home for soldiers awaiting medical boards. I never heard of such a thing.'

'Lieutenant Jackson said. . . .'

'Never mind what he said. I'm in charge here now, and I've just given an order. This man will return to his unit forthwith.'

Then he walked out and the matron went too. Two nurses came in and helped the man with ulcers into a wheel-chair. 'So long, mates,' he said, then they wheeled him away. I don't know what became of him: he just disappeared. After that we straightened the beds and got them all in line.

'Keep order!' said the lance-corporal. 'Why the hell should I keep order? I'm not an N.C.O. no more, they'll revert me soon's I get back. I'm Y Listed, see? A bloody private, so why should I bother? Bleeding sauce!'

I wondered when they were going to chuck me out. Forthwith, he'd said, and forthwith turned out to be the next day.

I left about two o'clock. In a lorry. It dropped me at the station and I'd two hours to wait for a train. At last I got back to the camp and it looked all changed somehow, with no one about. Everything seemed shut up. I reported to the orderly sergeant's bunk. Sitting in it was a corporal I'd never seen before.

'Who're you?' he said. 'What d'you want?'

I told him.

'No one told us you was coming,' said this new corporal, scratching his head. 'All the others have cleared off. Jerry been bombing the camp, see? We've been evacuated. Last draft leaves tomorrow.'

'Am I on it?'

'You'll be on it all right.'

'Well, where do I sleep? And what about my kit?'

'That'll be in the stores, I suppose. Buggered if I know. I'm from another company, I don't know nothing about you. Wait here, I'll see the storeman.'

But the storeman was out, and the stores were locked up. The corporal came back scratching his head.

'Buggered if I know when he'll be back. Gone on the piss, I shouldn't wonder. You better find a place to kip down. Here's a couple blankets, if that's any use to you.'

Eventually I found a barrack-room that wasn't locked: all the other huts were closed up. There were two other blokes in this room, both out of hospital. 'Where're we going to, mate?' they asked me.

'Damned if I know.'

'Nobody bloody well does know, that's the rub.'

At last, after a lot of conjecture, we dossed down for the night. It was autumn by now and turning cold, and my two blankets didn't keep me very warm. I slept in all my clothes. Jerry came over during the night but didn't drop any bombs, or if he did we didn't hear them.

Then in the morning the corporal appeared. 'I've found some of your kit,' he said. We went down to the stores. There wasn't much of my kit left. Most of it had been pinched. My overcoat was gone and another one, much too small, left in its place.

'I don't know nothing about it,' said the storeman.

'You better get some breakfast,' the corporal said. 'I'll sort this lot out for you.'

Breakfast was a bacon sandwich, all the cookhouse fires had been let out.

'Bloody lark this is, ain't it?' said the cooks.

'You're telling us,' we said.

Then we paraded on the square, about forty of us. Don't know

where all the others came from. Other companies, I suppose. A lieutenant was in charge of us.

'Where's your equipment?' he asked me.

'I've never been issued with it, sir,' I said.

'Never been issued with equipment!'

'No, sir. I was excused parades. And then I've just got out of hospital. I have the papers here, sir, that they gave me.'

'Oh, all right. I'll take charge of them.' He took the long envelope from me. Then a sergeant turned up and shouted: 'Shun! By the left, quick—*March!*'

We started off.

'Keep in step, there!' the sergeant shouted at me. 'Can't you keep in step? What the hell's the matter with yer!'

'I'm excused marching, Sergeant,' I said. 'I've just come from hospital.'

'Oh. All right, lad. Fall out. Wait here.' He went up to the officer and saluted. 'Scuse me, sir, there's a man here excused marching, sir.'

'What's that? Excused marching? Well he'll have to bloody-well march. This isn't a convalescent home.'

'It's five miles to the station, sir.'

'Oh, well, damn it, what d'you want done? Shove him on a truck or something. *Can't march*, indeed! He'd march soon enough if Jerry was after him.'

So the sergeant told a truck to stop and helped me to board it. It was full of kits and very uncomfortable, I nearly fell off twice. I felt a mass of bruises when we got to the station, and my leg had begun to ache. I sat down on a trolley and waited for the train to come in. It didn't come in for an hour, and the men, who'd marched up meantime, stood around and argued about where we were going. Some said Egypt, but others said No, because we weren't in tropical kit. So then they said Scotland and *then* Egypt. I personally didn't care where we were going; I was fed-up with the whole business, and my leg ached badly: I'd hit my bad knee getting down from the truck.

Then the train came in and it turned out to be full of recruits from another regiment going to wherever we were going, a new camp somewhere or other, and so we'd nowhere to sit. We stood for a long time in the corridor and then I tried sitting on my kit, but that wasn't a success because fellows kept falling over me and

one of them kicked my bad leg. I was pretty browned-off by this time, so I got up and was going to sock him, but another chap got in front of me and said: 'You can't hit a sick man.'

'Who's a sick man?' I said. 'I'm a sick man.'

'So am I,' said the man I wanted to sock. 'I'm sick too. Hell! I got a hernia so bad they daren't operate. I'm waiting my ticket.'

'Sorry, mate,' I said. 'I didn't know.'

'That's okay,' he said, so we shook hands and he gave me some chocolate out of his haversack: we'd got bloody hungry by now.

'What about some grub?' everyone was saying. 'Where's the grub?'

By and by it came round in tins. A sergeant brought it.

'What's this?' we said.

'Beans. Take one.'

'Where's the meat?'

'You've had it,' said the sergeant. Everyone cursed. Then an officer came round, a captain. 'Any complaints?'

'What about some more food, sir,' we said.

'There isn't any. I've had none myself,' he said. 'Mistake somewhere.'

'You're telling us,' we said, but not to him.

It was dark when we got to this other town and the searchlights were up overhead. We formed up outside the station. Our sergeant appeared and recognized me. 'I'll see to you in a minute,' he said. But he couldn't, because all the transport had already gone. So I had to march after all. It was three miles, and after all that standing about I felt done in when we got to the new camp. We had a hot meal and I'd have slept like the dead if Jerry hadn't dropped a bomb somewhere near the barracks and woken me up.

'Bugger it,' I said. 'Now we'll have to go to the trenches.'

But they didn't blow the alarm after all, so we went off to sleep again.

In the morning I was down for sick, but the M.O. at this camp proved to be a much tougher proposition than any I'd yet encountered.

He said: 'What d'you mean, you've had a medical board? How can you have had a medical board? Where're your papers?'

'I gave them to the officer in charge of the draft, sir,' I said.

'Well, I haven't got them. What was the officer's name?'

'I don't know, sir.'

'You don't know. My God, you give your papers to an officer and you don't even know his name.' The M.O. held his head in his hands. 'God deliver me,' he said, 'from such idiocy!'

'I don't think I'm especially idiotic, sir,' I said.

'Your opinion of yourself is entirely irrelevant,' said the M.O. 'And you must remember to whom you're talking.'

'Yes, sir,' I said.

'Silence!' said the medical corporal, who'd come up at this.

The M.O. said: 'Now what's all this nonsense about a medical board? What happened? Were you re-graded?'

'Yes, sir. B2.'

'Let's see your pay-book. Corporal, get his A.B.64 Part I.'

I produced my pay-book.

'Not in it, sir,' said the corporal. 'A1 it says here.'

'I know,' I said, 'but . . .'

'Silence!' said the corporal. 'Speak only when you're spoken to.'

The M.O. had his head in his hands again. 'All this shouting,' he said. 'If that man gives any more trouble you'll have to charge him, Corporal.'

'Yes, sir,' said the corporal.

'Now listen,' the M.O. said to me, speaking very quietly. 'You say you've had a medical board. You say you've been re-graded. Well, you haven't. It's not in your pay-book. Therefore you've not been re-graded at all. You're lucky not to be charged with stating a falsehood, understand? Now don't come here again with any more nonsensical stories or you'll find yourself in trouble. Corporal, march this man out.'

'But, sir. . . .' I said.

'Come on, you!' the corporal said. So I went. Two days later we started training, and the new sergeant found out I couldn't march and sent me sick again. It was another M.O. this time and he had my papers, they'd turned up again, and he said I've got to have another medical board.

That was a month ago, and I'm still waiting. I've not done much training so far, and I've had to pay for all the kit I had pinched at the other camp, and all I hope is this: that when they give me the Board, I don't have to go sick any more afterwards. I don't care if they grade me Z2 or keep me A1, so long as I don't have to go sick. I've had enough of it. I'm fed-up.

AUGUSTUS JOHN

FRAGMENT OF AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY—VII

MISTS gather over the blue estuary of time. These, as we look backward, sometimes shift, revealing bright passages, where, as in a crystal-ball, we see and recognize faces, shapes and colours known of old, and salute them before they are withdrawn under the falling veils of memory. The waves of summer break and seethe, criss-crossing as we paddle by the golden shore. Gathering the wild-flowers starring far-off hedgerows, shadowy woods, we seem to smell them again. A solemn boy crosses the marshes, making for the rocky pool on the hill beyond, invisible, and known, he fancies, only to him. Hidden in this cool sanctuary, where snow outlasts the winter, he watches, but vainly, for the amphibious sprite who dwells there to rise and for an instant smile before sinking back again to his weedy den. This boy, who was myself, in a fit of impudicity, would sometimes strip before his astonished companions and even under the eye of a speculative schoolmaster perform wild antics.

When accused, unjustly, of deceit, I am unable to defend myself, but in a paroxysm of grief, seem to admit my guilt. Not long did my master (whom I had loved) enjoy this satisfaction, and when he had punctiliously cut his throat, I grieved no more. Well-known caverns serve to shelter the unseemliness of adolescence and their watery *patois* re-echo to an ageless ribaldry. Here, young girls, tiring of childhood, would be as women and with effrontery confess their secrets. Once at least, borne up on clouds of gold, I seem to leave my body, and hover on the threshold of another world. While I read the story of Gerda and Little Kay, I am overcome. I rush from the room and in the privacy of some locked closet dissimulate my ungovernable tears. Or moved by a more formidable emotion, I throw myself upon a woman's breast and find warmth and comfort in her compassionate arms.

As I rummage among the piles of musty books encumbering

the attics, I discover, buried in the legal and devotional rubbish-heap, surprising works—the *Memoirs* of de Grammont, *Jane Eyre*, Mme Blatvatsky's *Isis Unveiled*, Richard Carlyle's *Key of the Arch*. . . . These for a while allay my hunger. Such literature in no way represented my father's tastes, which, as I have already indicated, were of a narrower kind. They were probably like the bogus Van Dyck in our dining-room, witnesses to the cultural adventures of an earlier progenitor. Intellectual curiosity was not numbered among my father's failings. The movements of his unexhausted passions, curbed under the discipline of an ever-present anxiety, were confined by vigilant compression within the stricter boundaries of avarice, and the widower discovered in the possession of an expanding bank balance a satisfactory compensation for the lost amenities of his bed. As a lawyer and a gentleman he would naturally eschew those paths which lead less scrupulous spirits to trespass on the uncharted territory of 'good fortune'.

The example of my parent, far from stimulating me to imitation, was wasted, and his pious admonitions were met by indifference or even hostility. To this perverse and refractory spirit must be attributed many of my shortcomings and much of the ill-fortune which has befallen me in life. I appear, in fact, to have perpetuated, only in a reverse sense, the principles laid down for my guidance as a child.

Those standards of exact and painful methodicity, together with an unheard-of moral or rather physical squeamishness, and above all the supreme doctrine of the Value of Money so painfully instilled, left me, I say, unmoved. Financially, I would seem to belong to that school of thought epitomised in the words of the Gypsy who said, 'When I wants money I goes and gits it,' or better still, I sit and wait for it to come to me, which, as is but just, it generally does, I find, if only in the nick of time. I have good reason to regret the lack of method which has been the cause of so many of my failures. For the rest, though perhaps something of a Puritan at heart, I avoid extremes of prudery and, socially, uphold the practice of an easy decorum.

Having agreed to undertake the portrait of the eminent Celtic scholar, Kuno Meyer, I said goodbye to Mme Strindberg and was composing myself in the train at Euston Station in pleasant anticipation of an interlude of work and leisure in the northern

port, scene of earlier explorations and discoveries, when that indefatigable lady appeared at the door of my compartment to wish me again an unnecessary and redundant adieu with the unwelcome assurance that she would soon be seeing me.

I had hardly got settled in Liverpool at the house of a friend and started my work when my plump Egeria arrived, but not alone. This time she was accompanied by a decoy-duck, in the person of Andrée, an agreeable young Frenchwoman I had already met with during my visits to Paris. When during a visit to an 'oyster-dive' to which I had introduced the ladies, a champagne bottle whizzed past my head, I realized the need for greater circumspection, for the projectile, although it missed its mark, did succeed in conveying the implication that I was, in some way, at fault. I had been guilty, I decided, of neglecting my hostess, while temporarily under the spell of her companion's charm. Andrée knew Montparnasse well, and while she deprecated certain 'modern' tendencies, which she used to describe as unfrench, she remained closely in touch with the traditional life of the quarter. My friends had established themselves in a hotel on the other side of the Mersey, and one evening I was persuaded to dine with them. As it grew late, with some difficulty I tore myself away from a hospitality which was beginning to cloy. Besides, I had to catch the last ferry-boat. Rapidly descending the stairs, I found the front door locked and bolted, but a window proved accessible and by its means I made my escape. As I dropped into the street, a policeman who happened to be on the spot expressed some curiosity as to my business in these unusual circumstances, but my explanations were accepted and I, hurrying to the landing-stage, boarded the boat.

Just as I was congratulating myself on my successful evasion, who should reappear at my side but Mme Strindberg! It appeared the implacable woman had felt a little resentful at my hasty and perhaps too informal departure and wanted a last word with me. There was not a moment to lose. Seizing her arm, I rushed her back to the hotel and with much strain and labour (for she was no athlete) the more difficult re-entry was at last effected. Having closed the window, I leapt back into the street and the arms of my policeman. His suspicions again aroused, I had, this time, rather more trouble than before in

allaying them, but finally the reasonable fellow allowed me to proceed and I found myself again on the ferry-boat as it moved from the quay.

I relate these ridiculous incidents, less for their entertainment value than as illustrations of the pertinacity and even violence which August Strindberg's widow was capable of and of which I was to experience many more proofs in the course of our acquaintance.

On the occasion when this female energumen had forced upon me the acceptance of £300 I was in a dilemma. Though certainly hard-up, I was rich enough in pride. Upon reflection I decided to send the packet of bank-notes to my friend, Bazin, whose experiments in aviation, I knew, were hampered for lack of funds. A year or two later my would-be benefactress learnt of this circumstance, but unable to believe my casual statement, at once posted to Martigues and there from the mouth of the recipient was assured of my veracity and ingratitudo. I may add that I never heard that Bazin's ingenious schemes were in any way advanced as a result of this transaction.

★ ★ ★

John Quinn, revisiting London, proposed that I should join him on a tour in France. I agreed, but warned him to keep the project secret and above all breathe no word of the time of our departure. Useless! Hardly had we taken possession of our seats on the boat-train when Mme Strindberg, apprised by some mysterious agency of our movements, arrived and with insistence offered us her company on the journey. Only by appealing to the guard and the use of a little physical force were we able to preserve our privacy. While crossing the Channel, however, John Quinn decided, from motives of humanity, to seek our fellow-traveller and offer her a cup of tea. I, meanwhile, kept strictly to my cabin, which I was careful to lock. On returning from his polite but ill-advised errand, J. Q. announced that an appointment had been made for the morrow in Paris. I told him to do as he liked, but in no circumstances to count on me. John Quinn's gentlemanly solicitude had apparently evaporated by the next day, for instead of keeping his rendezvous he took me to see his friend, Thomas Fortune Ryan, an American dollar-king. We found this exalted personage in occupation of most of the

Hotel Bristol and attended by a few devoted courtiers. Mr. Ryan (and none of his intimates, I noticed, ever addressed him less formally) was tall, elderly, friendly and naïf. He chewed an expensive cigar, but never lit it. He seemed pleased to see Quinn and inquired how much he was making. Quinn quoted some astronomical figure which I suspect was exaggerated. In the evening, my advice being asked, I suggested we should visit the 'Bal Tabarin'. This turned out a success. A young Kabyle woman of great beauty joined us at our table. This dusky girl's whole person exhaled a delicious odour of musk or sandal-wood. A childlike candour illuminated her smouldering eyes. . .

After Mr. Ryan had distributed largesse among the personnel of this establishment we escorted him to his hotel, where, bidding him and his attendants good-night, I returned to the Tabarin. John Quinn wished to see some pictures. Accordingly I took him to chez Vollard, Rue Lafitte, where we were shown numerous works by the best contemporary painters, but Quinn did not care for them. On a later visit to Paris, he, by this time more sophisticated, invested in a number of works by the same masters and so formed the nucleus of the important collection he built up in the ensuing years. Their prices had been enhanced a hundred-fold since I had first recommended them. Mr. Ryan having lent us a superb Mercedes with a burly German chauffeur, we now set out on our tour. Mme Strindberg, we learnt, was so mortified by our neglect that she committed one of her 'suicides', but as usual survived. Our objective was Marseilles and we chose the western route which brought us through Touraine. I thought the famous châteaux rather vulgar, but Quinn I could see was impressed by them. I had already begun to question the soundness of his judgment; first, when in the train from Calais, I observed him to remove his 'felt' and deliberately replace it with a slate-coloured cloth cap; next, when he failed to take my advice about pictures, Rue Lafitte; and lastly, when viewing the Cathedral of Chartres, he remarked that it was a pity so fine a building was devoted to religious purposes since it would have served admirably as a municipal hall or tribunal of some great popular assembly. But Quinn was full of surprises and they were not all disappointing. One night when creeping at a snail's pace through an unknown road in the Cevennes, during a dense fog, the New York attorney suddenly

gave vent to a despairing cry, and in one masterly spring precipitated himself clean through the window, landing quite harmlessly on the grass by the roadside.

Quinn's nerves were undoubtedly on edge. I put them to the test on our return journey. We were descending a tortuous and precipitous mountain road leading to Le Puy, where we had planned to pass the night. An abyss yawned on one side and on the other an overhanging cliff seemed about to fall on us at every turn. Quinn inquired of me the German for 'slow'. 'Schnell', I replied, and 'Schnell' he shouted to our Hun, who, with a deprecatory gesture, obediently accelerated. Being an accomplished trick-driver he succeeded in bringing us down without mishap and we arrived in good time for dinner. Quinn, however, obviously much shaken, retired to bed. Eywald and I had a good laugh over this incident. I was not sorry to have an evening to myself and the chance to revisit alone various corners of the town already known to me. Although Le Puy has spread most untidily beyond its ancient periphery, the old buildings, clustered under the admirable Romanesque Cathedral which crowns the central rock, still hold a sombre and melancholy charm, like some dubious old Master which, despite retouching, has gathered in the course of centuries a dark and kindly integument of dirt and varnish. A few miles to the south the Loire issues from the heart of a little hill. Soon gathering volume, the predestined stream encircles the strange volcanic pyramids of this valley, till descending more swiftly through the deep gorges of Arlempes, by a grandiose detour it gives birth to Orleans before expanding in the broad reaches of the western lowlands to lose itself at last in the Atlantic. I think we were both glad when our tour came to an end. We were not quite a success as travelling companions. Like many people who have achieved wealth, Quinn felt ill-at-ease outside the familiar security of a luxury hotel. As these are all exactly alike, there seemed little reason to move from one to the next. But I, with greater curiosity, was inclined to seek in more popular resorts the life and colour I enjoy, and thus we were forced to polite compromises, satisfactory to neither.

Big bank accounts, I know, need not be counterbalanced by a corresponding poverty of outlook, but it does seem as if they sometimes awaken in the possessor a kind of timidity which



makes the propinquity of less favoured folk an embarrassment to be avoided like the plague. Artists, however, have always had the gusto for life which leads them to court the unpredictable, and they will venture without fear, though perhaps at some risk, into the jungle which lies without the well-guarded ramparts of convention. In the age of grandiosity and musketeers, Louis le Nain found in the miserable cabins of the subjected peasants fit material for his brush. Jacques Callot evidently preferred the company of strolling players, beggars and gypsies. Rembrandt himself having tasted the sweets of prosperity in close association with all that was polite and aristocratic in the society of Amsterdam, when ostracised for some infringement of the social code, took refuge in the slums of the Jewish quarter, and seemed, though in penury, happy enough there, for he painted better than ever. In fact, the reign of Hendrike Stoffels turned out to be yet more glorious than that of Saskia van Uylenborgh.

A few more hours in the overwhelming dullness of Mr. Ryan's company and we were back in England. In the homely atmosphere of the Ritz, John Quinn soon recovered from the wear and tear of foreign travel and was again his genial self. His spirits rose perceptibly at the prospect of an immediate return to the New Country.

I should not omit to mention the part I took in the Great War, inglorious though it was. The knee which I had injured in Ireland, at the hands of the doctors only grew worse. At last I took it to Sir Herbert Barker, who in about two seconds of expert manipulation replaced the 'semi-lunar' and I threw away my crutch. Months of ignorant treatment, however, had weakened this joint and 'sinovitis' would keep returning. When next I damaged the other knee in exactly the same way, I lost no time with doctors, but sought Sir Herbert's help again. Again he was successful, but the military authorities at Dorchester Barracks, on examining me, found both knees impaired and I was dismissed.

Towards the end of the War I obtained a commission as official artist in Canadian War Records under Lord Beaverbrook. My field rank allowed me to move about freely. I made many studies of soldiers. I collected the material for an immense mural which was to be embodied in a War Memorial building at Toronto. This building, designed by Rickards, was never

built. The enormous cartoon all the same will eventually go to Canada. My favourite field of operations was at Liévin, a completely devastated town opposite Lille which was in German hands. A medieval château transformed into a modern gun-emplacement formed a convenient and picturesque centre. From there I visited the batteries and points of interest along the sector. The silence and monotony of that desolated country was broken by intermittent shelling and bombing as the enemy sought out our batteries and ammunition dumps. I was billeted at a village called Aubigny, where was the one restaurant still functioning in the district. A rough shed, it was run by an excellent French matron; she had been in Amiens during the German occupation. P. Wyndham Lewis, who had joined me at Aubigny, hearing this and thinking to '*faire de l'esprit*', said '*Est-ce qu'ils vous ont violé, Madame?*' 'Monsieur,' replied the patronne with dignity, '*Ils se sont conduits beaucoup mieux que vous.*' This good woman told me she could never accustom herself to the kilt. For example, when the Scottish soldiers got dancing—'*mais il pourrait avoir des jeunes filles!*' I came back to my 'château' one evening to find it de-roofed and windowless; the Fokkers had paid it a visit. In that intensely cold winter of 1918 this attention was most unwelcome. An occasional escape to Amiens or Paris alleviated the boredom of my life, not that I didn't enjoy painting and drawing the stalwart Canadians who sat for me, and I was far from insensible to the camaraderie which war engenders, but *il y avait des longueurs....* When the final clash came I was ordered to decamp, for all cars were needed and I would have been helpless without one.

* * *

Frank Harris, whom I had met in London on occasions, persuaded me at last to visit him at Nice. I had resisted his blandishments up till now, and despite repeated invitations had not joined him at Ravello, where he had been occupying Lord Grimthorpe's famous villa. But being at Martigues I decided to go as far as to Nice, with a view to doing some painting perhaps, while profiting by the hospitality of this remarkable man. I had first met him at a house in Wellington Square, Chelsea, where he was one of a distinguished company. Will Rothenstein, Charles Conder, Max Beerbohm were of the party, but Harris was

decidedly the *pièce de résistance* and held the floor. A large and handsome lady, Miss Constance Collier, here captured my attention, and I suggested her sitting for me. The popular and engaging actress at once agreed to this, but I said it would be necessary for me to find a larger studio for this purpose. 'Why not take the Crystal Palace then?' replied the jovial creature. Frank Harris presented a bold front to the world. Stocky in build, his broad chest was protected by a formidable waistcoat heavily studded with brass knobs. With his basilisk eyes and his rich booming voice he dominated the room. Hair of a suspicious blackness rose steeply from his moderate brow, and a luxuriant though well-trained moustache of the same coloration added a suggestion of Mephistopheles to the *ensemble*. His oratorical and sardonic sallies elicited their invariable meed of laughter and applause.

As our acquaintance grew, he displayed a very friendly interest in me and gave me some of his books, among others a copy of *The Man Shakespeare*, sumptuously bound and dedicated to me. He bought a drawing which he caused me to inscribe to him. I met with this later in a dealer's gallery. His book, *The Bomb*, I did not approve of, but *The Man Shakespeare* impressed me deeply, and it was this that turned the scales and decided me to overcome a certain suspicion and accede to his request that I should join him for a while. Accordingly I set forth in my corduroys with my painting materials and a small handbag. I was met at Nice by Harris himself in evening dress. Rather disconcerted by my lack of *chic*, he none the less insisted on conducting me to the Opera House, where he had a box lent him by the Princesse de Monaco. Frank's wife Nellie was there, uncomfortable in a kind of second-hand splendour. An opera was being performed, and presently its author appeared, one Isidor de Lara. He disliked me on sight, I could see, and for my part I loathed him and the infernal din for which he was responsible. He and Frank, however, seemed the best of friends and vied with each other in mutual admiration. Frank for Isidor was 'the greatest intellect in Europe', while Isidor for Frank was the 'modern Wagner'. Afterwards, Nellie and the composer having left, Frank and I sat up late drinking champagne and listening to the nightingales as far as my host's conversational flow would permit.

The Harris's 'Villa Edward VII' was situated in a suburb of Nice and was in every sense suburban. Frank having shown me my room, his wife's and his own, left me. What made this place sinister was the behaviour of Nellie and Harris's lady secretary. These two constantly clung together, giggling hysterically, as though some desperate mischief were afoot. F. H. and I sallied forth into the centre of the town during the day. Our method of getting there comfortably was simple. There were always a few private cars waiting about in the adjacent high road, and Frank, having selected the best available, without much difficulty persuaded the chauffeur to run us down to the Promenade des Anglais, where, having tipped him, we descended in style. In his dealings with tradesmen and others, Frank invariably spoke of his Rolls Royce, *en panne*, and under repair somewhere in France. This car I soon guessed was, like Elijah's Chariot, a purely mythical vehicle.

Frank Harris's gift for buffoonery entertained me enormously. I love a buffoon, and for sheer lowness Frank was unrivalled. His nightly dissertations in more ambitious vein rather bored me. His chief subject was Oscar Wilde, whose life he was then writing. Showing me the manuscript, I found the narrative interlarded with pious sentiments and with constant references to Jesus Christ. I asked him what the devil he kept dragging in J. C. for. He looked black at that, but I believe my objection moved him to modify this absurd pose of religiosity.

On the night of the third day our understanding came to an end, or rather I should perhaps say reached perfection. By this time I had come to loathe the sight of this monster, and he knew it. I, it seems, had failed him, and his resounding eloquence was wasted on Nellie, who responded but with nervous giggles to the grandiose prospect her husband painted of a 'European Courtesan's' career. 'Oh, Frank, how wonderful to be a genius!' Poor Nellie wasn't up to it. Nor was I . . . Frank, never a type of beauty, looked uglier than ever that night. Very early next morning I arose, and gathering my few belongings stole out of the Villa Edward VII and made my way, this time on foot, down the hill to the harbour, where I took refuge in a sailors' café. Ah! the exquisite relief! To be alone again and out of that infected atmosphere, that madhouse! To be among common fellows and free to go as I pleased. I went back to

Martigues. A few years later I saw Frank Harris again. It was in the Café Vaugade at Nice. He was seated with the faithful Nellie, and I joined them for a few moments. Frank was now an old, lonely and dejected man. 'John', he growled, 'I can only understand my contemporaries.' Upon that I left him.



Quinn's remark at Chartres, which I thought outrageous at the time, contained, perhaps, though inadvertently, some significance. For the Gothic Cathedral, while embodying the Christian Mystery, symbolizes at the same time the structure of a Social Order which, rising from the foundations of the village commune, blossoms forth at last in the incomparable splendour of the Free City of the earlier Renaissance. We find in it, upon analysis, the doctrine of the Macrocosm, set forth, though cryptically, in the disposition and dimensions of its parts. The classic dictum 'Man is the Measure' is here restated. Upon the face of Notre-Dame de Paris are to be observed the figures of the immortal Triad, *Liberté*, *Egalité*, *Fraternité*. The slim stems spring in clusters from the ground, converging above like hands in prayer. Beyond the fretted clerestory angelic voices join in acclamation of the Divine Man, of his Mother and of the Ancient One, who, above the door, enshrined within the mystic perimeter of the *vesica piscis*, benignly reigns. . .



Amadeo Modigliani was a charming fellow normally. His habit of absorbing hempseed may have assisted his imagination; it certainly distorted it. But *Cannabis Indica* is an untrustworthy mistress, and when conjoined in forbidden alliance with the seductions of alcohol may prove disastrous. Such a combination was too much for 'Modi', and whatever satisfaction he derived privately by an agglomerative addition to both means of spiritual exaltation his resultant behaviour often embarrassed his friends and always disconcerted the completely innocent strangers whom at random he chose to pick on as butts for the exercise of a gratuitous and unintelligible sarcasm. In a word, there were moments when he became a pest. When less over-excited he

was modest, naïf and affectionate. 'I am a decorator,' he used to say, 'I make garden statuary.' This was before he launched out so notably as a painter. I visited his studio at Montmartre one day and acquired a couple of the stone heads he was making at the time. He had many of these on the floor, all much alike and all prodigiously long and narrow. Returning to Montparnasse after this transaction, Modigliani remarked with feeling, '*Ah, comme c'est chic d'être dans le progrès!*' In a burst of generosity he pressed upon me his well-thumbed copy of *Les Chants de Maldoror*. This was his Bible. I cannot say I took to Lautréamont immediately. These stone heads of his affected me strangely. For some days I found myself under the hallucination of seeing people in the street appearing to be exactly like them! And that without resorting to the Indian Herb. Jacob Epstein, Modigliani, Jack Squire and I would sometimes roam about Paris together. On one occasion 'Modi', feeling low, complained of his lot and the difficulties besetting his career with an allusion to racial prejudice. '*Alors*', I said, '*c'est malheureux d'être Juif?*' '*Oui, c'est malheureux*', he replied, but Epstein protested vigorously against this assertion. Jack Squire in those days sailed under freer and less authoritative colours, his progress unimpeded by the incrustation of ideological barnacles which later slowed him down. The flag still flies, indeed, but its device has been changed. He seems to have fetched up in a weedy Sargossa Sea, where, slowly revolving on his own axis, he makes no headway. Thus becalmed, his chances of attaining the New World appear to be slender. This, conceivably, may not be his objective, but given a favourable hurricane he may yet, like Columbus, hit on it by accident. In this case Sir John will have nothing to regret, for he will find that cricket is all the rage in the Caribbean (at least in the Crown Colonies) and his conservative apprehensions will prove to be groundless. I would recommend Jamaica, an island as beautiful as it is backward. Here Sir John Squire, installed as Governor, would fulfil his august office, an ornament, an example and a sedative to the whole colony, and I would at once go back there. Why is it we find no place for our distinguished literati in the Imperial pattern?

Perhaps the view of Paris from the Sacré Cœur is the most wonderful in the world. Seen at twilight when the lights of the

immense city extended below begin to twinkle amid the blue emanations of ten thousand chimneys, and the myriad voices of the people joined to the clangour of the streets reach one's ears in a confused and general murmur, deep and vibrant as the sigh of a cow in parturition, one's soul is seized by a kind of anguish. 'What is to come of all this? What will it bring forth? What on earth can it mean?' I asked Pascin, my companion, his views on the architectural style of the Sacré Cœur. '*La Cathédrale*', he said shortly, '*mais, c'est comique!*'

Pascin, with his *melon* over one eye and his air of a very tough guy, was to me a sympathetic being in spite of a certain strain of sadism which betrayed itself now and then. It must be admitted his witty little girls, however elegantly drawn, are not remarkable for modesty. One day in a restaurant I was startled to see him, in a moment of impatience, draw a knife across the throat of his mistress, raising a little blood, and with this proof of his love she at once became radiant. . . . The last time I saw the gifted fellow before his suicide was in the Café du Dôme. He tried to attract my attention, but sunk in one of my unsociable moods I pretended not to see him, and I have never forgiven myself for this baseness.

SZOBEL AND THE HORRORS OF WAR

HERBERT READ, in a remarkably interesting study prefixed to the programme of the present exhibition at the Czechoslovak Institute, describes Callot as the first artist to give us a subjective reaction to the horrors of war. The strength of Callot's drawings, a common property which it shares with those of Goya and of Szobel displayed in this same exhibition, is its insistence on war behind the lines, war involving the civilian and the peasant. The idea of this totality is not modern, but as old as war itself, and its appeal to any artist, unless, like Leonardo, it is the mechanism of battle spectacles which he is studying, is immediate and profound.

In this context one wonders why Read omitted to mention Brueghel's *Massacre of the Innocents*. Brueghel is a painter who almost alone among the great masters is cursed with a total failure to get the credit his technical and conceptual achievements deserve. The Massacre should be in one's mind when one criticizes Szobel, because it represents the synthesis into a major work of an inspired vision of detail, this partite vision which Szobel displays so fully. Also, being designed for the gallery and not the portfolio, it is composed as a succession of integral groups and these again re-composed into the whole, on a framework of perspective, landscape, and a general structural unity.

The treatment of the horrible, whether in literature or in art, is a problem in itself, and an extremely severe test both of the artist's technical ability and of his balance between pity and objectivity. There are sure to be two conceptual elements in any such scene—the reality of the incident it depicts, and the superimposed psychological identity which the figures take on them in the minds of the artist and his audience. Suffering in art is recognized as one of the definitive instruments by which psychological reactions can be set in motion—in other words, it is a part of the myth, and predisposes to a symbolic interpretation. The crudest form of this reaction is the artist's own delight in, or shrinking from, his subject. At a finer level all the characters take on new identities: the torturers may be identified with the onlooker's desires for domination, in which case the picture will give satisfaction—or with his own fears or enemies or impulses, and the identity of the tortured is equally Protean. It is clear that the degree of this ambivalence in a topical subject, such as Szobel has chosen in the persecution of Czechs by an invading army, is largely in the hands of the artist, and the preponderance of the psychological 'ghosts' over the political reality will fluctuate with his technic.

Szobel has exhibited just under fifty drawings on parchment, an oil panel, and one or two gouaches. His reactions to colour are rudimentary, and there is an underwater quality in his coloured work which upsets its composition and blurs the forms. His achievement is entirely that of the drawings and the panel of *Lidice*. It took courage to hang these upon the same rail as Goya's *Miserias de la Guerra*; however the derivative elements in Szobel are not salient: it is the differences of technic and approach which are most striking. The character of Goya's drawing lies in its brightness and incisive linear forms (most rejected

versions are darker than the final plates): Szobel's, in its imaginative employment of darkness, whether as spray, in dense negative highlights, a sort of scotoma intruding into the picture and imposing emphasis and reticence on a face or a blow—or in the preponderance of alleys, cellars, cells, dark groups. All the landscapes which one imagines to surround Goya's drawings have a high wind blowing through them, bending figures and heightening lights. Szobel's belong to the confined spaces of the world. It is this claustrophobia which one notices first.

An even more important difference is in the kind of conviction which the pictures carry. One cannot estimate how far they were conceived as propaganda, but when Goya says 'I have seen this' one believes him. Szobel's whole treatment is not of seen incident but of imagined nightmare. He is not recording the visual horrors of war, but the horrors of apprehension. These grotesque groups are the fears grouped in the mind of the fugitive, the detail blotted out by fine clouds and sprays of darkness unfilled by the mind: far more than any experienced oppression, it is these elements in the refugee's consciousness that drive to flight or suicide. Szobel's drawings tend to underline the idea one gets from Koestler, that the worst thing about the Gestapo is the waiting for it.

It is partly because of this that the panel of *Lidice*, unless one treats it as the image in the mind of a survivor who was warned in time, does not convince. The important thing in such a subject is its reality—that it occurred, not that the artist conceived it. Now this half-lit animal struggle between men and brutes will bear no imaginative identification with the destruction of a village. All the combatants are Szobel's own fears. In choosing, rightly, to depict a detail one rather feels that he has selected an unpromising detail to depict, bearing in mind the purpose of the work. There would have been no struggle. One can guess that the most vital element in the whole scene would have been the order and similarity of the attackers. Brueghel would have conceived it happening on an abnormally cold and clear morning, when the attackers' uniforms were bright and similar. Nobody knew better than he how to draw action in cold blood. Szobel instead gives us an impassioned and improbably personal struggle. Yet the personal element *par excellence*, which could have given his group a timeless allegorical meaning, as the perpetual conflict of humanity against militarism—I mean the faces of the attackers and the attacked—is omitted; and the amaurotic patches and shadows invade the expressions of the actors and hide them. This reticence decreases the strength of the conception. Brueghel would have shown them all; on one hand distaste, resolution, cruelty, pity, lust, anger, savagery—as many different faces as there are men in a detachment posted to a dirty and debasing expedition: on the other a desperate, bedraggled unreality, an unwillingness to grasp all that is happening, defiance, and the anaesthesia of fear. *The Massacre of the Innocents* is conceived on exactly these lines. Looking at the grasp of multiple detail which Szobel shows elsewhere, one heartily wishes he could have worked more in keeping with it, in a more linear medium, and on a slightly larger scale. It is unfair to estimate *Lidice* in terms of realism. It is a painting of the refugee mind, not of an event. As such, its interpretation is both acute and fearless.

In the drawings, the unreality is never misplaced, and it never fails in its communication of fear. Most of the work shows a full and creative sense of the importance of composing animate and inanimate objects in a single, not a

double, scheme. In *Refugees* and *Before Questioning* it is the inanimate which obtrudes upon the animate—in one the figures are asleep and one is reminded of Ernst's treatment of masses and their surfaces. In others the figure composition is the mainspring. *Women of Inferior Race* is Szobel's nearest approach to a great drawing. Its implicit criticism—drawings of this kind cannot fail to imply moral judgments, whatever their intention—is sane, factually acceptable, suggestive both of the real thing seen and the conceptual reaction of the seer. To this same realistic category belong *Jewish Procession* and *Military Objective*. In two others—*Sparks of Revolt* and *Franc-tireur*—he is struggling after the same creative realism by going back to line, as if trying to brush away the subjective veils and clouds which blur the image. But in spite of his *Women*, Szobel's success is not in the field of realism. It is in the pictures which are pure nightmare, fears which the artist did not see realized, and upon which unconscious sexual and personal symbols are imposed, that the spray technic comes into full play. The corpse, especially the bound and mutilated corpse, blended with, and emerging from an inanimate structure, has been the material of surrealism in a good many hands, from the explicit figures of Dali and others to the dummies of Chirico, and the more implicit death-forms of Matta. Where it occurs in Szobel—*In the Wake of the German Army* and *Torture Chamber* of 1942—the element of realism is entirely submerged. These paintings are of the pure stuff of the myth, and as such transcend all political or moral purpose the artist may originally have had. The drawings are not, like Goya's impaled dead, atrocity photographs. They expose fully and for the first time the blending which takes place in wartime between our dream-symbols and our fear of a personal enemy, and their importance lies in their interpretation of the mind of the fugitive, of his dreams.

For my own part I see, perhaps wrongly, in Szobel's work a record of a very sensitive artistic pilgrimage, from an attempt to achieve by desperate effort some such artistic objectivity as Goya achieved, in the face of a constant unconscious drive toward a wider symbolic or surreal interpretation: the gradual yielding to that impulse, and the later fructifying and developing of what the artist seems to have realized as a hopeful and creative tendency against which there is no need to struggle. All this work will suffer from its exploitation as a picture of factual suffering. When I ask leave to question how many of the dream-scenes this artist has in fact witnessed I am not questioning his political veracity. The programme gives us a fatuous extract from Stransky's preface to a Penguin Book of drawings, to the effect that their aim is not to horrify but to make us hit back. Stransky may have had that from Szobel himself—but as an estimate of the work it is puerile. This interpretation of what the fugitive fears is more real and far more important than mere atrocity propaganda. In this war, as in all wars, the real atrocity is against the mind, in the acceptance of destruction, in the apprehension of unconscious fears personified, as though one's obsessions were to grow bodies and walk. Killing, said Rilke, is part of the exiled misery of our life.

ALEX COMFORT

Graphic Arts: an exhibition of the drawings and paintings of Callot, Goya, Daumier, and Geza Szobel, at the Czechoslovak Institute, July 1942.

Civilization: drawings by Geza Szobel; preface by Jan Stransky. Penguin Books. 2s.

SELECTED NOTICES

Poems of This War. Edited by Patricia Ledward and Colin Strang. Cambridge University Press. 5s. net.

New Poets. Keidrych Rhys. John Heath-Stubbs. Sydney Keyes. Alan Rook. Routledge. 2s. 6d. net.

MORE WAR POETS

Poetry should have behind it, apart from what is too mildly described as a 'feeling for words' a marshalling of madness, passion, and sanity. Madness from those moments when the brain is pierced and possessed by some particular sensation, so enveloping that these moments remain suspended and are never forgotten; passion from an emotion so strong that to contain it is impossible; and sanity to collect and communicate a truth.

Most of the poems reviewed here show no sign of madness, very little passion (one suspects the emotions are derived too much from reading, not enough from living), and the sanity so lacks grandeur that the result is an anaemic timidity which does not even give truth to facts.

In *Poems of This War*, though there are many poets with different opinions, the one thing they have in common is a cautiousness in committing themselves about the war, a detachment in fact, which lacks any quality of saintliness. In a preface Edmund Blunden says: 'the chances, the prospect, are touched upon, but without elaborate protest,' and goes on to quote as an illustration:

‘After the band has gone
There will be music
But how many of us will be there to hear it?’

Though the rest of this poem, by Ivan Hargrave, is better than this extract, there is something profoundly dreary in the fact that the chances and prospects of war are touched upon without any protest, elaborate or otherwise. Is it possible to consider agony, upheaval, and death without protest, emotionally at any rate? To say nothing of those terrible embryos of death, pain and separation? Resignation is now looked upon almost as a virtue instead of a defect. There is a distinction between facing tragedy or change, and adapting oneself to it, and mere masochistic acceptance of disasters. This last attitude can so often lead to despair (great art can spring from despair, but not when it is combined with a shrug of the shoulders), and many promising writers give up the struggle by refusing to come out of some particular tunnel, and forever afterwards only try to create from used-up experience behind them, and their work consequently becomes damp and flat.

Resignation produces most unreality in the poems about friends killed by the war, among which Patricia Ledward hits a new low.

‘We, your friends, will not give way to alien tears,
But we shall think in firelight of your grave voice reading verse,
Remember all your wit, your poses, and your heart
Far kinder than you’d ever have us guess.’

Come! let us dance in nightclubs you frequented,
Covet with envious eyes half-breeds you wished to gain. . .

There is more genuine feeling, but unfortunately no more skill, to be found in the section of love poetry than any other in the book. The few talented contributors set a good standard, below which no collection of the work of younger writers should fall. David Gascoyne is really musical, and his poem *Walking at Whitsun* is the best in the book, because the emotion by which he is moved is not lost through sentimentality or heroics. Patches of Lawrence Whistler and Robert Greacen are promising, and Alex Comfort is original in his talent. He is, however, obscure, and the last lines in his poems, though they seem to be attempting to give a key to the rest, are sometimes very puzzling.

This volume is a proof that, far from there being no poets in this war, the word 'war' produces an automatic reaction of 'poetry' to many people, who otherwise would not express themselves in writing.

There is great contrast between the first four poets chosen in a Routledge series of *New Poets*. At one end we have John Heath-Stubbs, with much talk of centaurs, wild goats of the mountain, and angels who

' . . . move with shifting feet
Over God's polished floor in high pavane
Trailing their lace-like wings on bright mosaics. . . .'

and at the other there is Keidrych Rhys,

'I scared the sheep
I bulged after
Through the gap to Old David's cow pasture,
Teacher said I never polish my shoes.'

Between these extremes lie Alan Rook and Sydney Keyes. Alan Rook takes trouble with his poetry, but it remains disappointing. This is partly due to an unoriginal use of words, and partly to a curious lack of core, which results in a straggling mood and makes it difficult to take a good bite anywhere. Sydney Keyes is very uneven, at times he is good, at others hopelessly unreal with poems of the sort that mention bones, sockets, and nails.

Keidrych Rhys has a quality entirely lacking in most of these poets, which is vitality. His poems in this series are nearly all spoilt by lack of selection, and what appears to be lack of trouble (there is one which comes off completely, *Poem for a Neighbour*), but one feels that if a really good poem is ever produced by one of these writers it will be by him. The relief of finding someone with violence, enjoyment, and too much to say, among this attenuated verse, is as great as that experienced on the first day of feeling normal after the muttering and melancholy of an attack of influenza.

DIANA WITHERBY

Living in Cities. By Ralph Tubbs. Penguin Books. 1s. net.

The *avant garde* architect is always haunted by the need to put across his ideas to the general public. These last twenty years, since Le Corbusier wrote *Vers une Architecture*, this has taken a specific form, that of a picture book in the shape of a stores catalogue. In these books a charming and disconcerting collection of historic buildings and natural phenomena is mingled with the achievements of contemporary technics. The glory of ancient Greece, the harmony of the Medieval community and the eternal rhythm of the solar system are cited as witnesses for the dawn of a better and more beautiful frame for our everyday life. 'Fitness for purpose', 'functional architecture' and lately 'let's not forget things must be beautiful', are so many slogans for the shapes of things to come.

Into this category of books falls *Living in Cities*. But what is the conclusion of this æsthetic apéritif? Mr. Tubbs is angry with the squalor of the decaying town . . . he deplores the smoke and slums of our cities; but isn't this only the shell of a smoky and decaying civilization? The shape of our homes, the form of our cities is the mere réceptacle of our life as individuals, as members of a community. The beauty and grandeur of our cities is conditioned by the state of society in which we live. It is on the fabric of the historic function (of three variables, technical achievements, economic conditions and political power) that our aspirations and beliefs are embroidered, it is on this fabric that art flourishes.

We may agree with Mr. Tubbs that our cities are in decay, but we can hardly condone his pessimistic cynicism and ascribe this to the 'badness of Man' who has permitted that 'Selfishness was allowed to rule', and that exactly from the nineteenth century onwards.

We may also agree that the Church was all powerful and an international link in some periods of history, but it is a far cry from that to conclude that: 'To medieval man, life and art, reality and romance were one, unified in religion.' Even in a popular publication it seems a rather bold assertion that ' . . . from now on (fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) technical advance was to go hand-in-hand with social regression.'

These are precisely the sort of popular misconceptions that a book of this order should clarify. It is only by understanding the laws of the ever-changing conditions of human society, which are essentially different from those of astronomic happenings, chemical reactions or biological function, that historic and social events can be explained. And it is only by understanding social and historic conditions that the life and growth, the beauty and the decay of our cities can be comprehended.

Mr. Tubbs, while giving us a charming picture book, has singularly failed to put down in black and white the pre-requisites of urban decency, which can exist only in a society where technical achievements, economic organization and political power are balanced, so that all three of these elements of human society can play their rôle in full.

The shape, the editing and the typography of the book are in excellent taste (perhaps a little too refined), there is a great number of photographs, some of them beautiful. It is a good shillingsworth.

ERNÖ GOLDFINGER



MARY KEENE. 1942. *Oil Painting* by Matthew Smith



Landscape Near Aix-en-Provence. 1932. Oil Painting by Matthew Smith



PRISON CELL. Drawing by Geza Szobcl



STUDY FOR 'LIDICE'. 1942. Geza Szobel

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*Published by the Proprietors, HORIZON, 6 Selway House, Lansdowne Terrace,
London, W.C.1, and printed in England at The Curwen Press, Ltd., Plaistow, London, E.13*